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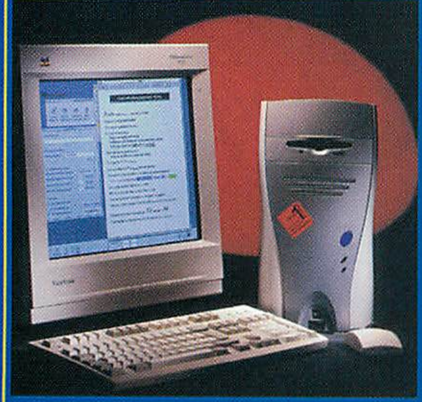
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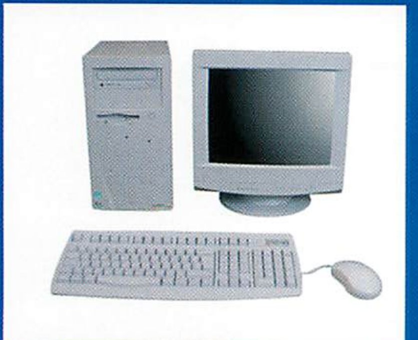


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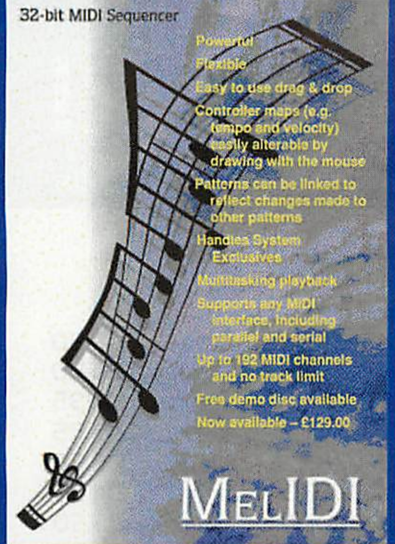
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RPC SA, RISC OS 3.7, 12+1Mb, 2014Mb HD,Cumana CD,10BaseT ethernet, PC card	£320.00b
RPC SA, RISC OS 3.7, 16Mb, 406Mb HD, Ultimate card & CD drive, Combi ethernet card, XOB Teletext card, backplane	£350.00b
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Editor's Comments

Sometimes things just work out right. As we have said in the past there are a lot of things going on in the background of the RISC OS market and some are making an appearance now and some will be making an appearance in the near future. We are in for some sort of stellar explosion, and hopefully not a collapse to brown dwarf status.

We have had a number of different pieces of software floating around having to do with connectivity and PCs, then there has been this request (from you the readers, well some of you anyway) to do something on Digital Video; along with the release of the Iyonix PC and so on and so on.

In addition to that was Steve Turnbull's use of WebJames in the development of his own Web sites and the further development of the Acorn User Web site.

Anyway, it all seems to have come to a head and in this particular issue we have a whole range of interconnecting articles related to machine connectivity. The Digital Video still isn't quite ready but we are taking steps and the article on it will be with you very soon.

So what do we have? We have CocoGnut, not really related to the other articles but a look at some very interesting software that allows you to search for data on other people's computers all over the Internet.

We have something on creating local area networks for your RISC OS and PC machines along with Remote Control which allows you to control your PC from your Acorn. Some people have complained to us about the PC advertising but, you know, you can own a PC for the benefits it can provide but keep it under wraps so you don't have to look at it.

And there's WebJames itself, which not only allows you to develop Web sites but can act as a server for your very own home or office Intranet. Now that is something all of us at Acorn User are very interested in.

Don't let anyone tell you RISC OS is behind the times, it may not have the frills but it does have working core that we all need.

Rob Donaldson
aueditor@acornuser.com

advertisers index
on page 48

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Device above require PS2MouseMini for use on RiscPC.

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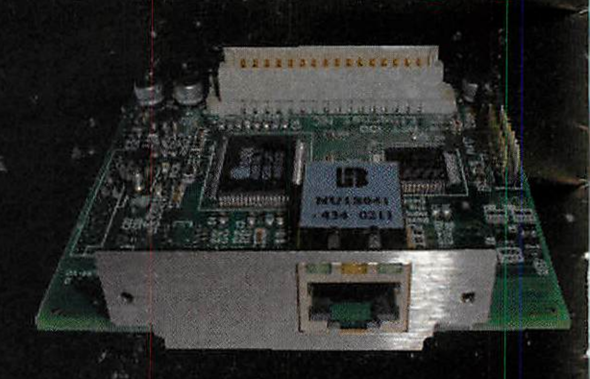


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Lanman98 = £41inc
Cables and other networking devices available

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Wireless USB adaptor: £79.95. PC version (no RISC OS drivers) £69.95

Wireless Access Point / Bridge / Media Converter: This versatile device allows single machine or groups of machines fitted with network cards to be integrated into a wireless network.

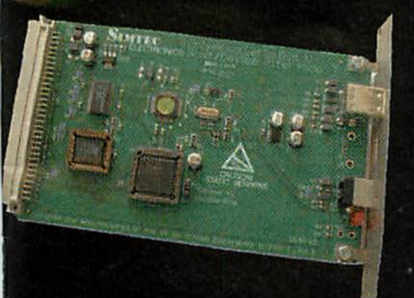
Wireless Access Point / Bridge / Media Converter £99.95inc

Wireless PCMCIA Card: For use with Portable machines: £59.95inc

Wireless Broadband Router: Please ask for details

cordless (pictured) £29.95. PS2MouseMini interface required. Laser trackballs are should be taken not to look into the laser beam. Please observe warning labels etc.

In association with: www. **RISCOS-USB**.com







Simtec USB card

Provides USB expansion to RISC OS machines

£79 + del + VAT = £99.95inc
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HP3820 USB printer: £120inc
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USB Mass Storage

Following last month's announcement that USB Mass storage was available to owners of the Simtec USB card, Castle have now announced the availability of drivers to support USB storage devices for the Iyonix PC.

The following devices can now be used using the new driver from Castle:

USB hard drives in native RISC OS format or PC "FAT" format

USB flash devices (key rings, memory cards, card readers and so on)

USB digital cameras

USB removable cartridge drives (ZIP and so on)

USB MP3 players

Owners of such "generic" USB storage devices can check whether their device will work with the native driver if it conforms to one the following non-vendor specific USB mass storage classes : 08 06 00, 08 06 01, 08 06 80. *USBInfo* will give you the storage class.

The new line-up of products are in addition to USB devices already supported by the Iyonix PC such as:

- USB printers
- USB scanners (including film scanners)
- USB keyboard (including multimedia)
- USB 3 button mice (including scroll)
- USB hubs
- USB tracker balls
- USB KVM switches
- USB to parallel printer cables
- USB graphics tablets
- USB bar code scanners
- USB to serial converters
- USB to PS2 converters

A compatibility database is available at **www.iyonix.com/usb/** to which users can add further device details in addition to those already verified by Castle.

The upgrade is free for all existing Iyonix PC users through the Iyonix PC update system. Castle have also released a new Printer Definition File for the Canon BJ i450 printer.

www.iyonix.com

RISC OS print house moves

Printmaker Studio, the 'RISC OS friendly' silkscreen and digital printing company, and vinyl lettering bureau has moved to new premises in Reading. They handle all graphic file formats including RISC OS applications such as *Artworks*, Cerilica *Vantage*, *Draw*, *Impression* and *Ovation*. They can now be reached at :

Printmaker Studio, Manton, Bath Rd, Padworth, Reading RG7 5HR.

Tel: 0118 971 2896
enquiries@printmaker.co.uk
www.printmaker.co.uk

Brain of RISC OS

Two of the key staff from the days of Acorn, BBC B and the formation of ARM Ltd are to receive the prestigious Royal Academy of Engineering Silver Medal award this month.

Stephen Furber FREng FRS, ICL Professor of Computer Engineering at the University of Manchester, won his award for his pioneering development of new computer chip technologies. His early work paved the way for the formation of ARM Ltd, which as we all well know now leads the world in 32-bit embedded microprocessor design. Professor Furber received his medal at the Academy Awards Dinner in London on Thursday 5 June.

Professor Furber's latest work is on asynchronous logic (the "Amulet" project), designing unconventional computer chips that can lie dormant until they are needed, saving energy and giving more design flexibility. It could extend mobile phone battery life, make smart cards more secure and simplify the design of very complex chips.

His original work at Acorn was on the development of the BBC Microcomputer. "The projection was to sell around 12,000 BBC Micros on the back of a BBC educational programme series," says Professor Furber. "In the end we sold over 1.5 million of them. The technology suddenly took off, just like the mobile phone boom in the 1990s. People found all sorts of uses for them that we'd never thought of. Of course the computer is a universal machine, it can do anything that you can turn into an algorithm."

He then went on to work on the development of the Reduced Instruction Set Computer (RISC) chip. The RISC idea had come from UC Berkeley in 1980 as a way of building simpler microprocessors that left more room on the chip for memory and other functionality. Professor Furber led the design team that first commercialised the concept as the Acorn RISC Machine.

ARM Ltd, the company set up in 1990 to develop and licence the ARM chips, now dominates the world market. Over a million ARM-based products are manufactured every day and 80 per cent of all mobile phones run on ARM processors.

Cambridge University Professor of Communication Engineering Andy Hopper FREng won his award for his phenomenal record of developing and commercialising new computing technologies. He has founded or co-founded eleven start-up companies, including Acorn, where he was Research Director.

Professor Hopper is currently excited about one of his newest spin-offs, RealVNC Ltd, formed last year to develop remote control software for desktop PCs. "This one is really going against the trend," he says, "we're going back to the old-fashioned idea of dumb terminals, which carry only graphics, linked to a central computer that does the hard work. It burns bandwidth passing all the instructions and graphics up and down the line but the trade-off is much simpler programming."

Five million users have downloaded over 15 million licences for RealVNC from its open source on the Web. "We're exporting British engineering to a huge number of people all over the world, in its own field this is revolutionary technology but we run it with three lads

in an office in Cambridge." A VNC Client is also available for RISC OS.

Secret SPAM tool?

SpamStamp is a program that connects to your POP3 mailbox and attempts to detect if a mail is spam or not. Some headers are added to the mail with the result of that check. Your mail client then decides what to do with the spam based upon the additional headers.

Deciding whether mail is spam or not is done by Bayesian filtering techniques (see **www.paulgraham.com/spam.html**).

This means that you do not need to set up all kinds of rules, but the system figures it out by itself. It also learns as it goes along, every time it makes a mistake, you tell it that it took a wrong decision. This then increases SpamStamp's ability to detect spam.

SpamStamp can be downloaded from **http://home.c2i.net/jjvdgeer/riscos/spamstamp.html**

The program isn't deemed an "official" release by its author, but so many people are now using it successfully to eliminate spam in their inbox, it now at least has its own Web page.

Multi-platform Messenger

Intellegit Ltd announce the immediate availability of Gemini, the multi-platform version of the popular RISC OS Messenger Pro mail and news client. Gemini is currently available for the Windows and Linux platforms and offers all the benefits and features of the RISC OS version, including:

- Offline and online mail/news handling including IMAP support
- Supports multiple mail/news accounts and identities
- HTML support when displaying and sending messages
- Unicode (international character set) support
- Message quote colouring
- Message threading
- Searching of messages
- Filtering, scoring and colouring rules
- Handling of mailing lists as pseudo-newsgroups
- Editing of stored messages and attachment stripping
- Hierarchical folder display
- Comprehensive address book
- MIME, UUcode and YEnc attachment support
- GnuPG encryption/signing support
- Netiquette checking
- Spell checking

Further details may be found at **www.intellegit.com/software/gemini/**

Gemini is fully compatible with the Messenger Pro server edition and this combination is therefore an ideal way to share access to your mail and news across a mixed RISC OS and PC network.

Gemini is available on a 30-day free trial by visiting **www.intellegit.com/trial.php** or may alternatively be purchased now, online by credit/debit card, from **www.intellegit.com/purchase.php**

Pricing is £30 per platform per user, including VAT.

RISC OS Printer+ source code

The source code to the RISCOS Ltd *!Printers+* front end is now available for download from the SourceForge Web Site under the project title of "roprinters". The project may be viewed via **http://roprinters.sourceforge.net/** or **http://sourceforge.net/projects/roprinters**

Printers+ provides a number of enhanced features over the standard RISC OS Printers application, including support for remote network printers, advanced printer configuration applications. Details on accessing the *Printers+* source, and on building *Printers+* using these sources are now available at **http://roprinters.sourceforge.net/**

The site also includes useful links to documents on the RISC OS Printing system, and details of the mailing lists for announcements of new versions of *Printers+*, and for user discussion of *Printers+*.

If you require any further assistance in accessing or using the *Printers+* sources from SourceForge.net then please contact the roprinters SourceForge maintainer David Marston **roprinters@illudium.org.uk** and he will do what he can to help, or to find answers to your questions.

While RISC OS Ltd are not releasing the Sources to the "back end" Printer Dumper modules at present, they are happy to co-operate with any developer who wishes to receive information on the PDumpers system in order to support new printing systems and computer models. All that is requested of Developers is that they are subscribers to the RISC OS Select Scheme and sign appropriate agreements in order to receive technical information.

Pop-up Printers

The pop-up version of *Printers* developed by Castle Technology for use on the Iyonix is now available for free download by existing RISC OS 3 and RISC OS 4 users from the RISCOS Ltd Web site at **http://acorn.riscos.com/acornftp.htm**

The Pop-up printer manager can replace existing versions of !Printers (though it does not have the additional capabilities of Printers+ to connect to a wide range of Networked printers) but does offer many new features:

Pop-up Configuration Connecting a new USB printer will cause !Printers to self-configure the new printer, popping up an active printer icon on the icon bar immediately with no manual setting up required.

"New printer" Window If the Printer Manager does not recognise a particular printer, a simple dialogue box appears allowing the user to select an appropriate Printer Definition File from those installed on the computer.

Full USB SupportThe new !Printers supports USB printers. The plug and play features of USB mean that a wide range of USB printers can now be used on all RISC OS computers.

"Duplicate" Feature Duplicate is a new feature that allows the user to

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COMPUTERS / PART EXCHANGE / REPAIRS

ITC offer a repair and a part exchange scheme on Acorn computer PSUs & PCBs. The following refurbished computers are supplied with a keyboard & mouse, but without a monitor.

RISC PC (with 200Mhz S/ARMs + R/OS 3.7 + Issue 3 PCB)

1032Mb HD, 16Mb+2Mb RAM, 103w PSU, Network Card	£310.00
1032Mb HD, 16Mb+2Mb RAM, 103w PSU, 2xCD, Net Card	£315.00
1221Mb HD, 16Mb+2Mb RAM, 70w PSU, 2xCD	£280.00
1032Mb HD, 16Mb+2Mb RAM, 70w PSU, 2xCD	£250.00

RISC PC (with ARM610 + R/OS 3.7 + Issue 2 PCB)

515Mb HD, 8Mb+2Mb RAM, 70w PSU, 16bit Sound U/G	£150.00

A7000+

ARM7500FE, R/OS 3.71, 1032Mb HD, 40Mb RAM	£145.00
ARM7500FE, R/OS 3.71, 1225Mb HD, 24Mb RAM	£145.00
ARM7500FE, R/OS 3.71, 812Mb HD, 16Mb RAM, 2xCD	£150.00
ARM7500FE, R/OS 3.71, 515Mb HD, 8Mb RAM, 8xCD	£150.00

Others

A5000 33MHz, R/OS 3.11, 162Mb HD, 4Mb RAM	£49.00
A5000 33MHz, R/OS 3.11, 210Mb HD, 2Mb RAM	£49.00

SPARES

420Mb IDE Hard Drives	£17.00
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A4 Mains / Charger Units	£38.00

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Mailing list	£50
Auto-responder	£20
Transparent forwarding	£10

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www.davidpilling.net/news.html for details

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The prize-winning Desktop Publishing program can now load Impression documents and runs on 32 bit computers.

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'clone' multiple configurations for a single physical printer. This makes it easy, for example, to switch between draft and high resolution without having to keep reconfiguring the printer manager.

Support for 'Long Control Strings' In support of the technical changes to the printer dumper software (details of which are available from **www.iyonix.com/32bit/PDumper.shtml**) the Printer Manager can now send very long control strings to the printer. It should be noted however that the API for these Long Control Strings is different from the API released by RISCOS Ltd back in March 2000, which is detailed on the SourceForge Web Site.

"Install New Printer" Shortcut The process of installing a new printer has been simplified by a new shortcut in the icon bar menu. Clicking on the "Install new printer" shortcut brings up the available printer definitions and a simple double-click installs the desired driver.

Other features include:

- Multiple printers on icon bar
- Editable printer name
- Background spooled printing
- Queue control
- Sharing for networked printers
- Parallel connection support
- Serial connection support
- Network connection (NetFS, Econet)
- Print to file, optionally appending to file
- Choice of paper sizes
- Editable paper sizes
- Drivers for a number of USB printers (Canon BJ S520, S450, S330, i550, S530D, Epson EPL5800 and HP DJ850C)

For further details contact:
Paul Middleton **paul@riscos.com**
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Fax: 02920 492326

ROXY Filer

ROX-Filer 2.0.0 is out now. This is the new stable release, and a major update from last year's stable release: **http://rox.sourceforge.net/rox_filer.html**

ROX-Filer is a small, fast, powerful Filer for Unix, Linux and compatible systems. Its user interface is based on the RISC OS Filer, and it supports similar concepts, such as application directories, drag-and-drop saving and popup menus. It also implements a RISC OS-like pinboard, and a panel which can be used in a similar way to the RISC OS iconbar. It also supports many features not found in RISC OS, including thumbnails of images, keyboard short-cuts, many more options, powerful search facilities, and so on.

ROX-Filer can be used on its own, with another desktop (such as GNOME, KDE or XFCE), or as the core component of the ROX desktop. The ROX desktop aims to bring all the good features of RISC OS to Linux/Unix systems.

There are three big changes in this release. The biggest is that the Filer now uses GTK+-2.0 (or 2.2) rather than 1.2. This is a major change, bringing many benefits, especially in the areas of text handling and appearance. However, it is also quite a lot slower than before. Therefore, it is unlikely that the Filer will run well on 486-type machines, even though the Filer itself shouldn't be less efficient than before. It is also reported to be sluggish on a P-90, but is perfectly usable on a P-333. The speed may depend on your graphics card too.

The new version of GTK brings support for the new X font system, which provides good-looking (optionally) anti-aliased fonts. It also uses a sane font naming scheme (eg "Bitstream Vera Sans 10") rather than the previous system of random dashes, digits and stars. All modern Linux distributions have this already set up, but if you're doing it manually, check the ROX FAQ entry on fonts ("Why don't my fonts don't look as good as the ones in the screenshots?").

The new GTK also uses double-buffering for drawing, which means that there shouldn't be any flickering when resizing windows, and so on.

A new pinboard has also been implemented which means:

It's better looking (icons and text can 'blend' with the backdrop at the edges, giving smoother outlines).

All window managers can support all desktops (although some are still in the process of being converted).

ROX-Filer is now in charge of the desktop background image (though using the pinboard in the first place is still optional, of course). This makes it easier for new users to set the backdrop, but means that people with cron-jobs using xsetroot, and so on, need to update them.

The filer already provides a drop-box for setting a centred, scaled, tiled or stretched image as the backdrop. It also provides an interface to let other programs set the backdrop. In particular, the Wallpaper application (**http://rox.sourceforge.net/wallpaper.html**) can choose a random backdrop when you log-in and change it at regular intervals too. It can also use the output of another program.

As well as the pinboard following the new window manager standard, better inter-operability can be seen in several other areas. In particular, support for the new thumbnails specification, which allows sharing thumbnails with Gimp, Nautilus, and so on, and the ROX,



GNOME and KDE MIME databases have been merged to produce a single shared database (which GNOME and KDE are currently adding support for).

The user interface is now simpler and cleaner. In particular, drag-and-drop now defaults to opening a menu of operations, clicking on mount points defaults to mounting and the options box is far less confusing. There is also a new GNOME button ordering for dialog boxes, which places the 'Yes, do it!' button in the bottom-right corner of all boxes (Mac style).

Other notable new features are the bookmarks menu, including a list of recently visiting directories, and the ability to set global short-cuts for any pinboard or panel icon. There are significant changes since 1.2.x, details of these can be found on the Web site.

Creative software line-up

John Kortink, creator of the popular *Translator* and *Creator* graphics manipulation packages has released a raft of updates to these and many of his other software titles.

Translator 8.21 and *Creator* 3.41 have had a few minor bugs fixed. While *GreyEdit*, *PackDir*, *EarthMap*, *FileAct*, *DiscInfo* and *ModeInfo* have all been rebuilt, thoroughly cleaned up and re-tested.

GreyEdit 1.40 has had a major facelift and is no longer restricted to pre Risc PC machines, and is now Freeware.

ModeInfo also got a major overhaul, is no longer restricted to RISC OS 2.00 machines, and even supports ViewFinder.

DiscInfo now understands RISC OS 4 maps.

John has been in the RISC OS scene for many years, and his impressive software line-up now includes :

- Translator is a powerful image viewer, processor and converter.
- Creator is an image format converter.
- PackDir is a very fast file archiver.
- EarthMap is an electronic globe.
- GreyEdit is a greyscale image editor.
- FileAct provides easy multi-file operations.
- DiscInfo provides extensive information on discs.
- ModeInfo provides extensive information on screen modes.
- ZeriLink provides fast file transfer via the parallel port (PC compatible).
- ZIDEFS is a replacement filing system for the Ian Copestake IDE interface.

All can be downloaded from **www.inter.nl.net/users/J.Kortink**

User group meetings

For Essex Acorn User Group:

8th July 2003
"Solar Eclipses" with Tony Lister.

August No Meeting

Email: **eaug@aaug.net**
Web site: **www.wattys.fsnet.co.uk/eaug/**

Virgin leaps on board with Wi-Fi

Virgin Trains, a British train operator, is installing Wi-Fi hot spots at Birmingham International and Manchester Piccadilly stations. Access is currently free, but charges are likely to be introduced in the future. There is also considerable interest in creating Wi-Fi networks within moving trains, but also technical obstacles, such as creating a high-speed Internet connection on a moving train.

Future soldier's massive network

U.S. soldiers in 2011 will step into wired uniforms that incorporate all the equipment they need. Uniforms will monitor vital signs and plug them into a massive network of satellites, unmanned planes, and robotic vehicles. Soldiers will wear an undershirt netted with sensors that monitor heart rate, body temperature, and respiration.

Uniforms will have built-in tourniquets that one day might be tightened and loosened remotely. Body armour is built into a load carriage that holds water, ammunition, batteries, and circuits to keep the soldier plugged into the network. The helmet will have cameras to spot enemies lurking in the dark or concealed by bushes.

ARM puts a lock on mobile chips

ARM has introduced hardware-level security technology for protecting copyrighted content, secure passwords, and other sensitive data on mobile devices. "TrustZone" could begin appearing in products in 2005. ARM said that it is providing a blueprint for integrating security functions onto its chips. TrustZone could help spread the adoption of applications, such as mobile commerce and corporate mobile computing, by ensuring that important data will not fall into the wrong hands.

Broadband takes off with Lufthansa

Lufthansa will add Boeing's broadband service to its fleet next year. The service will let passengers access the Internet and e-mail, and connect to corporate networks on their own computers, either wirelessly, using 802.11b networks, or via Ethernet connections built into the seats. According to data from the trial earlier this year, passengers were willing to pay up to $35 for the service on a seven-hour to eight-hour flight.

College adds virus-writing course

The University of Calgary plans to make writing a virus a part of its computer science curriculum. Ken Barker, head of the school's Computer Science department, contends that such a class is needed to better understand what motivates those who write malicious software, which he says is a growing problem.

However David Perry, Director of Education for anti-virus maker Trend Micro, and an opponent of the plan commented: "You don't send somebody out to shoot someone so they understand what happens when somebody gets shot."

Neil Spellings
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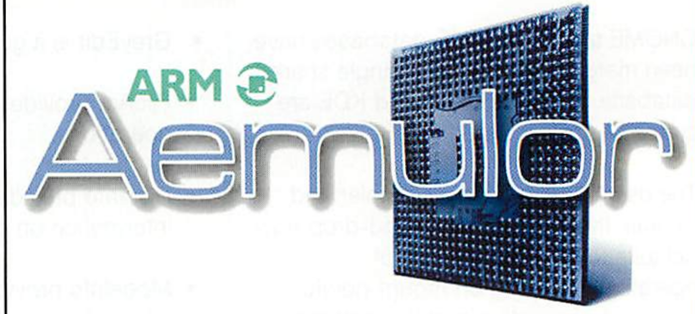
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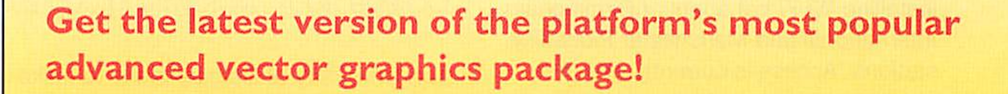
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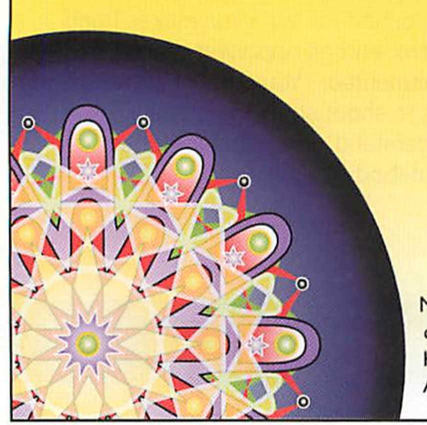
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Graphic design in the Real World, part 2

Brainstorming is an important early element of a creative project. If you're in a group, this will be vocalising any and all ideas which come to mind, the concept being that one person's crazy spouting may spark the beginnings of someone else's worthwhile idea; someone else may take the baton and develop it further until you have a number of tangible ideas which can then be explored in a more disciplined manner.

You can't brainstorm in that way when you're on your own, but you can utilise the same principle: look at the description of the job and get as many first ideas down on paper as you can. It doesn't matter how bad some of the ideas are: it may contain the germ of better idea, which may lead to more and more viable results.

Occasionally, it's the company name or initials that suggest logo or trademark solutions rather than a graphic image. The "M" of McDonald's or the "dti" of the Department of Trade and Industry are well-known examples. For instance, I was once asked to come up with a logo for the "Distributed and Desktop Services" department of a company called CSC.

I must admit that the ideas didn't come flowing from my brain. In these circumstances I'll look at the name itself and see if anything suggests itself. After a few sketches I saw that I could do something with the letters of "CSC" and "DDS" to combine them, to make one look twice. By adding stems to the "c"s I made them into "d"s:



I always like to give my clients three different approaches to a logo, so that they have a choice. One of these approaches will then be developed into the final piece. So, back to CSC...

I wondered if the department might like to be abbreviated to simple "Desktop," so I offered a treatment on that idea, using the angle of the "K" to produce a two-tone black and white design:



Finally, I thought of combining the initial letters with a simple graphic image. I wondered how to suggest a computer-based department; I explored a mouse mat, which has a strong and recognisable outline:



In the end, the client dropped the job due to major internal restructuring, but one thing I've learned is to keep everything! There may come a job later in which previously rejected ideas are just what's required. For example, I was reminded of the "Desktop" idea when later I was asked to design a masthead for a newsletter called "Link Up."

Once again I used the sharp angle of the central "K" as a design element, suggesting an arrow which indicates a "link up." Once again, this used the power of words rendered in a strong, visually memorable way, rather than a pictorial device.



I managed to recycle the mouse mat idea too, when a computer company ask4d for a new logo. Same idea with a



few changes to suit the new job:

Of course, the words or names themselves can suggest a way of presenting themselves. With a shop called "Hollywood Video," for example, you might instantly think of drawing the "Hollywood" like the famous giant hillside letters in Hollywood, California.

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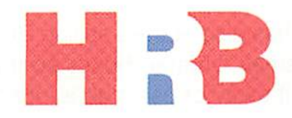
Or "Duchess Car Hire" might lead you to using a fancy, regal font. The Cultural Projects Unlimited logo below, I felt, asked for a cultural, almost historical font.
With Terry Butcher's Soccer Academy, it was Terry's name which gave the project weight, so I asked him for a signature and stylised it, making it the key element in the logo.

Many business names consist simply of a set of initials or a number which



doesn't immediately give you a route to a visual image. In these cases you can make the company's name a feature and its name becomes its own visual identity. "HRB" for example doesn't bring any particular image to mind, so I would brainstorm with the letters, looking for how to make the name memorable.

My solution was to draw the letters in a heavy font in strong colours, but to use white space between the "H" and the "B" to outline the middle "R."



Such visual tricks are common in logo design, and the smallest out-of-the-ordinary twist will raise the logo's lasting power. Next time you see Microsoft's logo, note how ordinary it is, except for that little cut out of the "O", it makes you look twice, and therefore is a successful logo design.

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Talking to the enemy

While it might sound like heresy, the truth is that the Windows PC has long been an important part of the RISC OS market. PC cards were an early creation for the Archimedes, and before 32-bit you could have a DOS second processor on a BBC Micro across the Tube. In fact as early as 1983 there was a Z80 add-on to the BBC Micro that ran CP/M.

After the podule-based PC card was popular we got the Risc PC with its second processor which was a very radical and, at least in theory, a PC on a PCI card will plug into the Iyonix. So anyone who thinks that the "dark side" is something Acorn machines and RISC OS has avoided as much as possible is living in cloud cuckoo land.

What has become rather more true as time has gone on is that peripherals have become more and more oriented to Windows and you can't get drivers for RISC OS. (Though generic drivers for USB products does modify that argument somewhat.)

However to take full advantage of these peripherals it is better to have dedicated drivers and you can't get them for RISC OS.

R-Comp have a solution, in fact they have several solutions. The first of these which we looked at a few months ago, the Uniprint system which allows you to connect !Printers via a network to the current printer on a PC and use its superior printing facilities.

R-Comp has also started selling PCs, in the new small "shuttle" boxes so that you can hide it away or use it as a foot rest.

However even then the PC has to be connected to a monitor, keyboard and mouse in order to get it up and running each time. It's true you can get switch boxes but wouldn't it be nice to do away with these things altogether? Well I can't guarantee that you can but with the latest software from R-Comp called Remote Control you take that extra step in turning a PC into a RISC OS peripheral.

Connections

The first stage which is necessary for all these things to work is a working network connection between your PC and your RISC OS machine. And that in itself can be an adventure, so here is my tale of adventure yours will probably be easier but there are some important lessons to be learned.

First we'll look at the equipment being put in place. I have three computers that I want to network:

Risc PC: This is my standard working machine, it has a Simtec USB card with wireless mouse and keyboard. It has a parallel port Zip drive, an old mono scanner (Computer Concepts vintage) I don't do a lot of scanning. It didn't have a network card and for communications it uses the ANT Suite. It has a StrongARM 233MHz and RISC OS 3.7, it has been upgraded again and again over the years in terms of both software and hardware, so has lots of custom tweaks that could potentially get in the way.

Iyonix: Brand new (of course) built-in 100Mbit networking latest version of Oregano with a very fast hard disc (with the latest fast upgrade). No extra software.

TX2: This is the PC, mentioned last month this is the size and weight of a small but decent dictionary (not a dinky dictionary). Three sides sprout connections and the front has a DVD drive. In the desk we have it sits very comfortably in the small space between the desktop and the drawer unit. Completely out of the way, if you didn't know it was there you wouldn't notice it. It fits our requirements of an invisible (but well-connected) PC better than any other unit. It is supplied by HKi Systems.

We do have some of STD's wireless networking units but in the first instance we decided it would be best to get the whole lot up and running with cabling simply because there were less things to go wrong. This entire set-up was being put together at my home which, by sheer chance, has just had its exchange upgraded to ADSL. We will look at wireless ADSL another time.

So we have a 10 port network hub and some cables to link everything together. The first stage was to get a network card for the Risc PC, we had an old A7000+ knocking around so 20 minutes work had the card out of there and into the Risc PC. The software on the card was all out-of-date and conflicted with the ANT suite which proceeded to switch it off and unplug it. I did indulge in some messing around but eventually came to the conclusion that it knew what it was doing.

I was a bit concerned at configuring the ANT Suite over to the EtherH network driver. This is because I had just got WebJames working with the loopback option and I did fear that changes would make it all fail.

WebJames' documentation assured me that it shouldn't so I took the plunge and all was fine.

Now I must explain at this point that I am not a wiz with networks, I have fudged my way through before with them on a very much trial-and-error basis however I am willing to admit that I don't know much.

This is where R-Comp came to my assistance again. They have a set of guides that will help you install a network. They are very clear and easy to follow, particularly for RISC OS. They have asked me not to go into too much detail otherwise their guides won't be necessary, but I don't think I could make myself as clear as they have done.

Not only that but, if you do get stuck and you have bought the guides, they will provide telephone support. So I went through the R-Comp guides very carefully and configured my Risc PC. I thought it was right but you can't tell if your network configuring is right until you've got it talking to another computer on the network. Well there is one thing you can do, you can "ping" yourself.

The "ping" utility sends a packet of data to the target computer which will then automatically send a reply. If you get the reply then you will know that the link works. You can ping yourself which will at least show that the network software is up and running.

I felt the next thing was to configure the Iyonix. There are slight variations in the layout of the various dialogue windows but nothing so different that the guides were incorrect, in fact they have amendments for the Iyonix already.

So very rapidly I had the second computer configured, the Iyonix was easier to configure but a lot of that had to

do with messing around with the ANT Suitenot as I did on the Risc PC. On the Risc PC I followed the instructions which configures the RISC OS portion of the system, but than I had to do the same with the ANT Suite without instructions.

So with the Iyonix configured and the two machines plugged into the network hub, I ping-ed one from the other. It worked. I ping-ed the other way. That worked too. I was feeling cocky at this point though I knew the real trial was to come.

A point to mention is that "ping" on the Iyonix sends multiple packets one after the other and doesn't stop until you press Escape. It's not a problem, and does multi-task as long as you run it from a Task Window.

I thought that connecting the PC was going to be the hardest task. But in some ways I was wrong. I wanted to use Acorn's old Access peer-to-peer file sharing system between the two RISC OS machines.

The Iyonix seemed completely happy with this idea displayed the Access icon and, when I shared the drives on the Risc PC, they duly became available on the Iyonix. Transferring data was a doddle.

But the Risc PC was not happy. The ShareFS Filer absolutely refused to put anything on the iconbar. I spent nearly three hours trying everything I could think of. In the back of my mind I seemed to vaguely recollect something of the sort being a problem five years ago when I set up the original Tau Press Acorn network.

As time proceeded I became aware that what I was looking at was a partial initialisation. I also knew that the ANT Suite was part of the problem but I could not, through trial and error, stumble across what would solve the problem. That's when I phoned R-Comp, and that's when Andrew Rawnsley told me that the ANT Suite was the problem and that's why he'd written DialUp. And that the solution was a pain.

I didn't pursue it, I continued with the configuring of the PC but in the back of my mind I was desperate to solve the problem. I hate leaving things like this unresolved.

In the end I resorted to the Internet, it was clear this was a known problem and if this was a known problem it meant that someone had asked a question about it on the Acorn newsgroups and someone would have provided an answer.

I googled the newsgroups for "ShareFS" and "ANT" and found a solution almost immediately. It's not pretty but it works. All you have to do is create a RAM disc and then get rid of it if you want. This forces a reinitialisation of the Filer modules which fully initialises ShareFS and bingo! It's on the iconbar and everything worked. It's not ideal and I'm sure a little program could be written to be run at the end of start-up that would handle it but I'm not too bothered about it for now.

Connecting the PC

So the PC was physically plugged into the network and I pulled out the R-Comp Guide #2 for configuring Windows PCs for a local network.

So far I have used two versions of Windows XP which differ in a couple of ways. The guide does have additional notes for XP but it wasn't entirely right. The main difficulty was that, in general, versions of Windows have had the "My Computer" icon located on the desktop. To get at its "Properties" all you have to do is point at it and right-click for the menu and select the option.

On the version of XP on the TX2 machine the desktop had a shortcut to "My Computer", not the actual thing. It took me ages to find the actual item itself, even examining the properties of the link itself wasn't very helpful. I eventually located it in the Start-Up menu, which I found rather odd but then it's a different kind of operating system.

Configuring the PC is not exactly harder than configuring RISC OS, but the things that need to changed are located in wildly variant locations, unlike in RISC OS where everything seems to be in roughly the same place.

Anyway after a while I had got it all sorted and I could indeed "ping" the PC from both RISC OS machines. I was feeling quite chuffed with myself. Although nearly five hours had passed by this time, much of that was due to the ShareFS/ANT Suite problem.

There were three reasons why I wanted to create a local network with a PC: First I needed it for my Digital Video articles; second for the WebJames article in this issue; and finally to be able to run Remote Control, which is what this article is all about (and we are nearly there).

Remote Control

It was about this time that I suddenly realised that I had a problem. It was stupid but the TX2 may have a DVD drive but it does not have a floppy disc drive, you can get a USB one but I didn't have it. The R-Comp remote control software is very compact and comes on a floppy disc.

That was definitely an oops but I did not despair, I had a network didn't I? These machines were all connected together what could be difficult? Not only that but the Iyonix comes with Omniclient, the Acorn software that can use a whole range of network protocols.

All I had to do was run Omniclient on the Iyonix, have it set to LanManager and I would be able to access the TX2 easily and just copy the Remote Control installation software over to it.

Nothing could be easier. Not only that but the R-Comp Guide #3 told me how to do it.

This was the beginning of another nightmare. First of all on the Iyonix the Omniclient set-up software is not supplied, so you have to use the command line. However there is no easy way to see what the current settings are. *status showed that LanManager wasn't the current protocol so I followed the manual which explained how to change it to TCP/IP.

Next I had a great deal of fun by ignoring the manual and trying to get Omniclient to access the All Users shared files folder on the PC. The manual says just get connected to drive C (or whatever drive), I can wholeheartedly back that up.

At this point I managed to get it working and I could browse some of the folders on the PC, some refused to let me have access but I could live with that. Or I could to a point. I suddenly found that although I could take data off the PC, everything was write-protected I couldn't copy anything on to the PC. Frustrated again!

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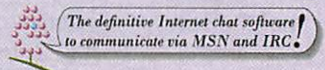
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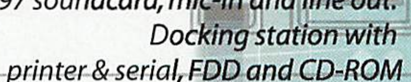
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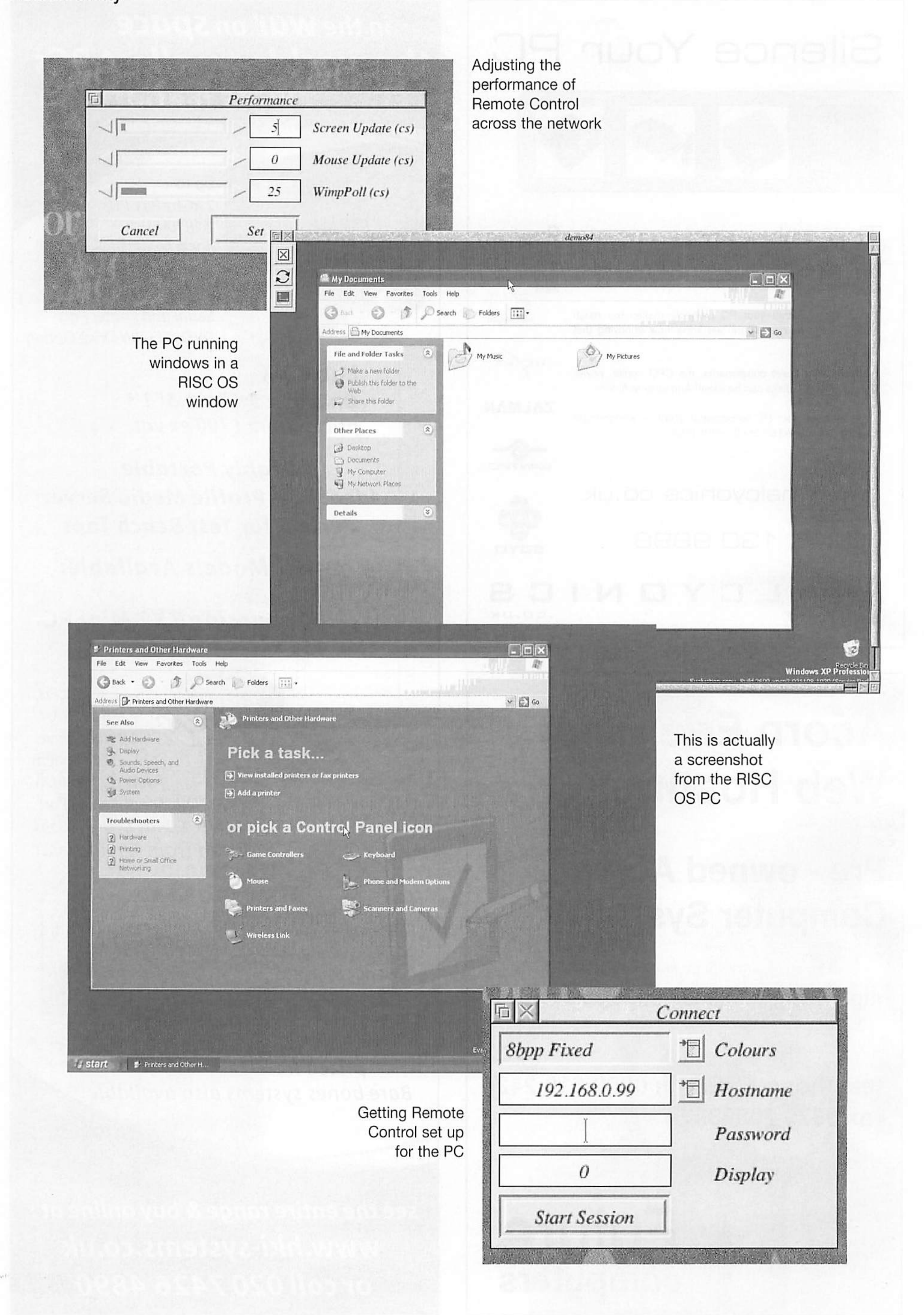
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Adjusting the performance of Remote Control across the network

The PC running windows in a RISC OS window

This is actually a screenshot from the RISC OS PC

Getting Remote Control set up for the PC



The PC end of the software sits in the tray in the bottom right ready to run whenever it receives a message from the RISC OS machine. Meanwhile the RISC OS software is just an application like any other and you run it when you want.

I tried everything and every time I tried to unset the "read-only" option for any folder it just reset again. No message saying I couldn't do it, in fact it seemed to be cooperating by telling me that this was potentially a bad idea. But no, every folder stayed resolutely read-only.

I eventually called a PC expert, who couldn't help. It has occurred to me in retrospect that since the version of XP is a trial version this may be a deliberate fix in the software so you may not come across it.

But when I went back to it I discovered that the root directory did not have a "read-only" setting and by sharing it and clicking the "let other people modify my files" option I made the root accessible. Everything else was still locked tight.

Anyway I was now free to copy the Remote Control PC software on to the PC and get it installed. Phew.

VNC

Remote Control is not an expensive package and part of the reason for that is that it is a packaging of existing software. We have mentioned in past issues of Acorn User about VNC which is a piece of software that allows one computer to control another and provides an image of the "controlled" computer's desktop on the controlling machine.

With Remote Control you get a PC disk which allows you to install the PC end of the software (the manual explains how to configure it best for this sort of operation) and the RISC OS software.

To run VNC at the Acorn end you need to know the network IP address of the computer you want to access. The nature of VNC is such that it will work perfectly well across the entire Internet. If you had a machine that was always connected you could use VNC to access it from anywhere in the world.

However the response time might be a bit slow and we're just looking at local networks across the room. If you have set up your local network then you should know the IP address of the computer you want to control. You type it in and off you go.

For efficiency it is suggested that generating a 256 colour on-screen image is the most efficient size, you can do more if you want to.

You can set a password at the PC end if you don't want just anybody accessing your machine. Again this is more important across the network however I would urge you to consider this: Certain ADSL providers will give you a fixed IP address (Demon do this).

If you have a fixed IP address it means that you exist on the Internet in a place where you can always gain access from an external source rather than it being pot-luck. This is both good and bad.

Anyway back to VNC, the window that pops up shows the contents of the PC's screen and you can link the RISC OS mouse to the PC mouse and just drive the PC as if it were in front of you. The response can be slow but you can tweak it. From the iconbar icon you have access to a number of options, such as saving the screen as a sprite, more importantly you can get at any text in the PC clipboard and save that. Or you can drop text from RISC OS on to the VNC session window and this becomes available for pasting on the PC itself. It would be nice if the clipboard facilities could be extended to any file type perhaps that will come.

The VNC main session window has a small toolbox which can close the session, refresh the screen or switch to full screen. Getting back from full screen requires the pressing of Control+Alt+Backspace.

If you are using Windows XP Pro it has built-in support for remote usage and an additional piece of RISC OS software called RDesktop is supplied to drive it. With this you get a less accurate representation of the desktop but the response is much faster. I didn't try it.

Conclusion

There is a fair bit of mucking about to be done in getting a PC/RISC OS local network running however you probably won't have all the problems that I did.

Apart from the software, which is not expensive, (and R-Comp do suggest software other than Omniclient to allow file access to the PC) you do need a PC (surprise) and you need the hardware cables and hubs.

If you are not already set-up it is going to cost about £200 not including a PC. Don't forget really cheap PCs don't come with an operating system or, if they do, it's probably illegal. R-Comp are in a position to supply you with everything you need including a PC and the RISC OS network cards.

Having said that there are a lot of advantages and once you've got the whole thing going there are a whole range of things you can do. Remote Control is only one of them, there is Uniprint and an Intranet too.

It is definitely worth taking a look.

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Memory Stick Lexar 128Mb	£32.99	£38.76

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Value Distribution UK

DVD, CDR, CDRW media	Ex Vat	Inc Vat
CDR Ritek 80m 40x white top 100	£66.25	£77.84
CDR Prodisc 80m 40x IJ printable 100	£23.95	£28.14
CDR Imation 48x J.case 100	£27.49	£32.30
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DVD-R 2X Verbatim 10 J/case	£18.00	£21.15
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DVD+RW 2.4X One 10 CB	£19.99	£23.49
DVD cases black with trans cover 100	£13.95	£16.39

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Getting the right position

Marketing is an interesting subject and doesn't have to involve endless lunches and bottomless expense accounts. It is a fundamental concept and when you are building your Web site it is something that you really should think about.

And just before we go into any depth on positioning, let's just consider something else: What is your Web site for? Is there actually one basic reason why any Web site exists? Whether it's a buy-online site like Amazon with tens of thousands of products (you can't really say "pages" for something like this, there aren't any real pages).

Or perhaps it's a huge corporate site that doesn't actually sell anything but tells you everything you need to know about the multi-national and all it's subsidiaries. Maybe it's just a "content" site, loads of information about ... oh, I don't know ... woolly jumpers or Star Trek.

Or a personal Web site with nothing more than a few pages on you and your family.

Do they have a common purpose? I think so. PR, public relations. It's true that ane-tailer site sells things, but it is also about PR: "look at how big our stock is, how cheap it is and how easy it is to get what you want".

A big corporate site is pure PR: "look how huge and powerful we are". Content sites are just the same: "look at how informative we are". And personal sites? Well even most personal sites provide something, and aren't they also saying "look how interesting we are"? And how many "RISC OS-based sites try to sell the concept that RISC OS is better than any other operating system you care to mention?"

They might do other things but the first step is PR. And the next step is marketing, and part of marketing is:

Positioning

So, what is positioning? First let us, in Web terms, see what it isn't: It isn't a position in a search engine. Definitely not.

If I say "Esso" to you what concept or image comes to mind? Tigers perhaps? Tigers in snow? Tigers standing on rocks looking noble and powerful?

That's positioning.

What about "Nike"? What do you get from that? Athletes? Power? Speed? Agility? A big tick.

That's positioning.

Let's try "Dyson": Tornadoes.

That's positioning.

Think about "Acorn": Green. Gone. Education.

Unfortunately that is positioning as well.

How about "The British Government". Well, perhaps not. A bit too controversial.

Now you might possibly, when I mentioned "Acorn", have thought of words like "power", "speed" and so on. But I put it to you that those were not the first ideas that went through your head. Not the raw concepts or images. Notice also that with positioning (in the other examples) there is a real thing associated with the product. A real thing that embodies the concepts you want your product to be associated with.

Apart from "Education", which they didn't choose or properly exploit, Acorn never had any positioning.

So what is positioning?

It is an association in the mind of the viewer between the concepts that go with a real thing and your product. So how do you go about selecting a "position".

Getting into position

Unsurprisingly I think it is worthwhile using "Acorn", or rather RISC OS, as the product for which we want to obtain a position.

However the first mistake is in thinking that there is just one "position". There isn't, there are as many positionings as there are market segments. And how many market segments are there for RISC OS?

Existing "ordinary" RISC OS users
Existing RISC OS teachers
Existing programmers for RISC OS
Lapsed "ordinary" RISC OS users
Lapsed RISC OS teachers
Lapsed programmers for RISC OS
Pre-RISC OS users (BBC Micro)
Pre-RISC OS teachers (BBC Micro)
Pre-RISC OS programmers (BBC Micro)
Existing developers for RISC OS
Existing educational developers for RISC OS
Recently lapsed developers for RISC OS
Recently lapsed educational developers for RISC OS
Past developers for RISC OS
Past educational developers for RISC OS
Pre-RISC OS developers (BBC Micro)
Pre-RISC OS educational developers (BBC Micro)
Non-RISC OS power users
Non-RISC OS gamers
Non-RISC OS businessmen
Non-RISC OS corporate management
Non-RISC OS corporate buyers
Non-RISC OS home users
Non-RISC OS non-computer owners
Non-RISC OS teachers

And so on, I haven't even started on hardware. Each one of these is a market segment and each one requires different positioning. Some may be similar but they are not the same. There will be (should be) a core image that everything else can be based around, Linux has the Penguin, Microsoft has the Windows logo, and so on. Each one of these is adaptable and can be used in more than one positioning area and thus provides a binding concept.

So we still haven't actually got to the bit where we have a go at the positioning itself, there's a good reason for that succinctly put by Michael Fischler, a very experienced Web marketer, and I'll quote him here:

"A strong position is one that already exists in the mind of the segment.

"I have sat through numerous positioning exercises, where people delineate the inherent qualities of their products, and then try to determine which positions they can adopt based on those qualities.

"Which is like drilling a round hole and then searching for a peg that fits it.

"A position doesn't begin with you. *You* don't define the position you're going to take. You assess what positions exist in the segment's mind and then determine which of those you have the best chance based on your own strengths of occupying and defending."

You cannot sit in an Ivory Tower and make up the correct positioning for your product. You might get lucky but you probably won't. The only way you are going to find out what the positions you should adopt are is by research. Hard work.

The first thing you do is you take your market segment and then find out what their opinions are. There are two ways of doing this, and you should do both. The first is "read all the literature" find out what it is that the market segment believes in, how do they judge products in that market?

The second thing you can do is surveys. Based on the information you've gathered from research you can build a survey to actually find out what people think.

The following is not actually gleaned from real research, I have just made it up. It might be right, after all I've talked to a lot of people in my time in the computer industry. But it could be rubbish.

Let's say we choose two of the segments mentioned above: Power Users and Businessmen, both non-RISC OS. From general knowledge we can guess at what computer users are generally interested in when it comes to computers:

1. Reliability
2. Speed
3. Connectivity
4. Compatibility
5. Expandability

For a businessman you might expect the priority order to be 1-4-3-5-2, while for power users it's more likely to be 2-5-4-3-1.

So the primary area for business is Reliability, can RISC OS live up to that one? Yes it can. The second area is Compatibility, hmmm, poor. Connectivity, can RISC OS handle that? Yes.

Now other vendors work hard on 4, so don't push 4. They generally try to skim over 1. So 1 is a very good area to position yourself. I'm not even going to bother looking at the power user one. You can if you want.

You can, if you have a lot of money, use things like Focus Groups, but simply finding out the places that these segments talk, and then listening to what they say will give you all the information you need and want.

One thing that should be mentioned is the subject of Price. It is important to understand one thing about price: You never, ever, take a price position. Stay away from that like a city with SARS (sorry, cheap jibe). Why? because positioning yourself as having a low price simply devalues you and your product. People sincerely believe that low price = rubbish. And they are usually right.

Just look at Stella Artois: Their entire marketing campaign is based on having a high cost. "Reassuringly expensive." And in the computer market, good PCs are not cheap.

There is a practical financial aspect to this as well: Let's say your product costs £100 to make and you put 20% on top. So you make £20 per item sold. Suppose for a moment you decide it's too expensive and cut your profit to £10 per item. To make the same profit *you have to sell twice as many*!

You see this is important when it comes to the argument for schools to use RISC OS machines instead of PCs because "it's cheaper". You have to understand: Those who do the buying do not care, "cheap" is bad positioning. You would be better off telling them it is more expensive to buy RISC OS machines, they would give it more value.

So learn this and learn it well: NEVER take the price position.

In selling RISC OS you look at the segments, you do your research and find out what the available positions are. If possible you find a position that no one else is occupying and you sell into that.

The logo

I once had a long-running argument with other RISC OS devotees about what image should represent RISC OS. At the time there was the push for the Red Squirrel, personally I hate it. To me it means things like: Minority; Endangered species; Roadkill; and so on. I preferred the Polar Bear: Cuddly on the outside and powerful on the inside.

Plus a Polar Bear identifies with the linux Penguin which attracts independant thinkers.

But actually it really doesn't matter what I think. Or what they think. What matters is what the market segment thinks. The use of the RISC OS cogwheel is fairly good, certainly as good as a window. It implies usefulness for instance, and effectiveness. But it may be too mechanical. A businessman may not want to be associated with what appears to be a workman's tool.

These things matter.

The actual thing that should be done is a survey to find out what images actually communicate the positioning we want to achieve. And that positioning is dictated by the target market segment not the opinions of devotees.

We have come a long way from Web sites but we can get back there. Let us suppose you have a content Web site about ... (off the top of my head) ... hairspray. The thing to do would be to listen to people talking about hairsprays and find out their main concerns. Perhaps it might be "Degree of shine provided" you could then promote your Web site on the basis of how it will tell browsers about the *degree of shine provided* by different hairsprays. And suddenly you're in.

There is one other little thing though: You really better provide that otherwise they will never come back and they certainly won't recommend you to a friend.

Steve Turnbull
steve@acornuser.com



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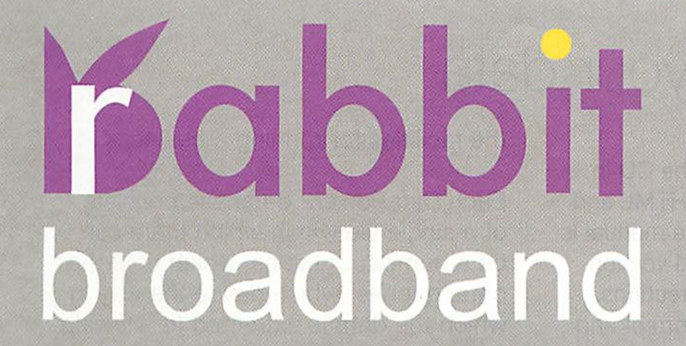


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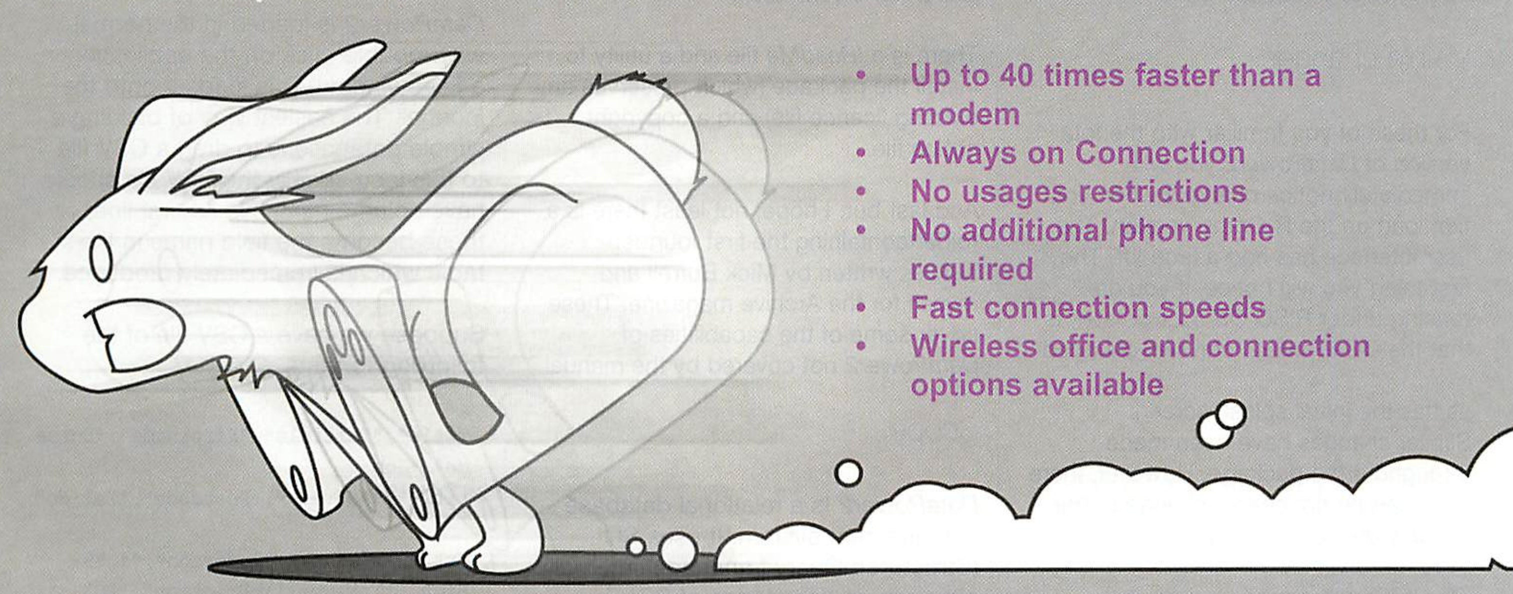
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More power to your data

R-Comp recently took over the development and support of the RISC OS version of *DataPower2* from Iota. This created great interest and the first new release was eagerly awaited. As that first version has just been released on CD, this article discusses *DataPower2* from a user's perspective. It is not intended to be a formal review, rather an overview of its main features.

Perhaps one of the most significant immediate changes to *DataPower2* is the relaxing of the protection system so hated by many users and potential users. R-Comp have introduced a registration scheme; only registered users will be entitled to full support and upgrades at a reduced price.

Visible changes

For those of you familiar with the Iota version of *DataPower2* you will immediately notice changes when you first load up the R-Comp version. The user interface has had a face-lift. The first thing you will notice, if you are running under RISC OS 4.xx or later, is that the *DataPower2* icon has changed:

as has the initial splash screen:
Similar changes have been made throughout the package. However, there has been no noticeable change to the actual working of package.

The CD contents

As well as *DataPower2* itself, the CD contains all the items which came with the Iota version, *Borders* (which has

DataPower 2
Single User
CD-ROM Edition
© R-Comp 2003
PK55970

always been part of *DataPower2* and defines the borders which can be applied to any item on a layout); a folder of example databases; and a folder with the files needed for the tutorial described in the manual.

The manual itself is also on the CD in three different formats: PDF, HTML and MSWord(!). The content of the manual is the same as the latest printed version from Iota with a very few corrections. There are plans to improve correct and enhance the manual as soon as possible.

A *Utils* directory contains copies of *!PDF* and *!WebsterLT* as a default means of reading the PDF and HTML versions of the manual.

A copy of the complete Iota Web site is included on the CD as is a *Zips* folder which contains a zipped version of the *ArtWorks* reader, the *Borders* application and *DataPower2* itself.

There is a *!ReadMe* file and a utility to install the package (which preserves any existing licence file) and a copyright notice file.

And last but, I hope, not least there is a folder containing the first fourteen articles written by Mick Burrell and myself for the Archive magazine. These cover some of the capabilities of *DataPower2* not covered by the manual.

Scope

DataPower2 is a relational database management system. It uses SQL (Structured Query Language) internally, although no knowledge of SQL is needed to produce quite sophisticated databases. *DataPower2* also supports a very powerful scripting language which greatly enhances its capability.

Again, very little knowledge of this scripting language is required for many databases but enables *DataPower2* to be a suitable product for creating the complete range of applications. These can range from a simple telephone list to a system capable of providing most of the facilities for running a business.

Each *DataPower2* database consists of a single file within which there can be a number of tables, which hold the data, queries, which define the way in which the data is extracted for viewing and layouts which actually display the data to the user. There can also be routines for manipulating the data. There is a fairly sophisticated password system which can be used to restrict the type of access available to individual users of the database. A *DataPower2* database can also be used by many users simultaneously over a network.

Creating a simple database

DataPower2 is loaded in the normal way: double-click on the application in a Filer window. This loads it onto the iconbar. The easiest way of building a simple database is to drag a CSV file to this icon. Ideally the CSV file should have column names in its first line; these become the field name in the table which is immediately produced.

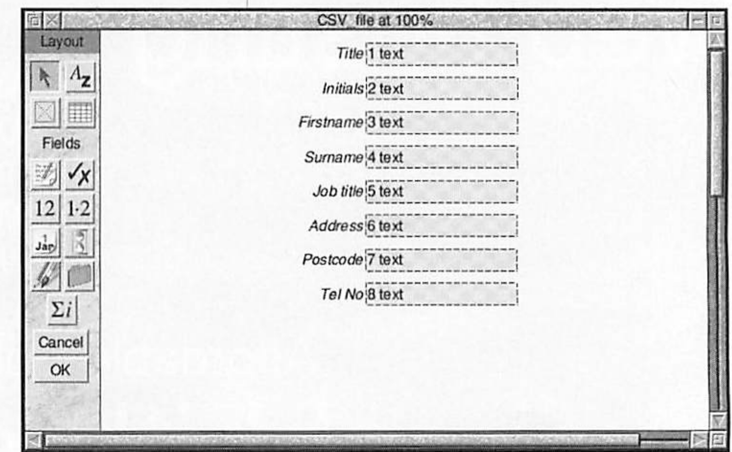
Suppose we have a CSV file of the following format:

```
Title","Initials","Firstname","Surna
me","Job
title","Address","Postcode","Tel No"

Mr","J","James","Anderson","","5
High St\nNewhall\nBrighton","BG3
4ED","0141 947584"

Mr","T","Tom","Anderson","","5 High
St\nNewhall\nBrighton","BG3
4ED","0141 947584"

Mr","M","Martin","Chapell","","23
Union Lane\nLONDON","SW2
```



```
3AW","01780 83576"

Ms","S","Sophie","Chapell","","23
Union Lane\nLONDON","SW2
3AW","01780 83576"
```

If we drag this file to the DataPower2 iconbar icon the window shown in Figure I is displayed:

Clicking on the OK button near the bottom left of the window will produce a save box. Enter a suitable name and drag the icon to a Filer window to save the new database. As soon as this is done the window will change to show the first record imported from the CSV file, see Figure II.

The records can all be seen, one at a time by clicking on the up and down arrows. New records can be added by clicking on the Add button and deleted by clicking on the Del button.

If you look at the display of the first record you will see that only part of the address is showing; the rest has been truncated on the view, but not in the database. This can easily be overcome as the size, position, colour, font, and so on, of the fields can be modified at will using the same type of manipulation as provided by *!Draw*. Figure III shows the same data displayed in a more pleasing manner.

As the data includes names and telephone numbers it might be useful to produce a telephone list from the data. This can be done quite easily, while retaining the address book display. Something like

Note that only some of the data is shown from each record, that a number of records are shown on the same screen and that the information is listed in two columns.

If not all records can be shown on the screen at once a scroll bar is automatically generated; the up and down arrows can also be used to scroll through the records.

Another common requirement is to produce address labels. Again DataPower2 provides a simple means of doing this and any label layout can be matched.

Figure V shows the top part of a sheet of labels from the data. Note that each address can be compacted automatically to remove any blank lines, if this is required.

Sorting

In the above example, an address book or telephone listing in random order would not be very useful. *DataPower2* provides the ability to sort on one or more fields with each sort key being sorted separately in ascending or descending order as required. Records can be sorted temporarily for immediate display or printing but sort definitions can also be saved for later use.

One of the powerful features of a database is to be able find just the set of records that match various criteria.

DataPower2 provides a comprehensive set of search capabilities. The type of search criteria available depends on the field type. Wild cards are supported for searching on text fields and ranges for numeric fields and date fields as well as exact matches. Searches on boolean fields are supported as are searches on graphics fields. The graphics searches can do exact matches on a specified graphic.

Search criteria on a field can include multiple conditions ANDed or ORed together, for example:

```
(>5 AND < 12) OR (>20 AND
< 100)
```

Search criteria can refer to other fields in the record, for example:

```
>'Minval' AND <'Maxval'
```

where 'Minval' and 'Maxval' are both fields within the record.

If a search results in more records than required the search can be refined by adding other criteria. It is also possible to include records based on new criteria.

Types of data supported

So far all the fields have contained text strings but *DataPower2* supports quite a wide range of field types. Perhaps the most obvious ones are integer number and non-integer numbers (real numbers).

Automatic checks are made to prevent invalid types of data being put into fields. It is also possible to define a range of allowable values from which the user can select by clicking on the required value in a list. Also more sophisticated checks can be specified, almost as precise or complex as one can envisage.

Boolean fields are supported - which may take one of two values, yes/no or true/false or tick/cross (or a null value which represents unknown).

Date and time fields are supported which can be entered in a wide range of ways but are displayed in a standard way. An interval field type is provided. this may hold a time period such as '3 years' or '6 months 2 days 10 minutes'. This can be very useful when dealing with time spans such as ages.

A very wide range of picture formats is supported; Sprite, Draw, ArtWorks and Replay movies among others. These can be included within the database file (taking up a lot of space) or kept external to the database with just a pointer to it retained within the database.

It is possible to define a field of type 'file'. These can contain the content of complete files, of almost any type; they appear on the *DataPower2* window as an icon of the file type, or a pointer to the file. In both cases they behave in the same way, they act as they would within a Filer display. The file type may also contain pointers to directories.

The final type of field supported by *DataPower2* is the formula field. This, as the name suggests, contains a formula which is evaluated by *DataPower2*. This can range from a simple arithmetic calculation to very complex formulae referring to other fields within the record and utilising the wide range of built-in functions.

The formulae may also manipulate objects of types other than numeric and string; the type of the result will determine the way in which it is displayed. For instance Draw files can be "added" together to form a composite picture.

All field may have default values which may be constants or formulae. Fields may be defined as unique or mandatory.

Functions

DataPower2 has a large number of in-built functions. These fall into a number of groups; conversions, arithmetic, text, date, graphic and general. The following subset should give an indication of the extent of these functions.

All cases where it would be sensible to convert from one data type to another are supported. For example from a text string containing a number to a real value, and vice versa; from the internal date format to a text string of the date. It would not be possible, of course, to convert a graphic into an integer.

There are 22 functions in the arithmetic section; these include such things as minimum, maximum, average, sum, median, all the trigonometric functions (sin, cos, tan, arcsin, and so on) log, natural log, exponent, degree and radian.

There are 12 function in the text section; including the usual ones, len, left$, right$, mid$, string$, instr, and more including some unexpected ones:

Replace which substitutes one string for another wherever it occurs in a third string; it is also possible to some control over upper and lower case.

Score counts the number of exact matches between two strings.

Lookup which returns the value found in a specified column of record in an external file where the first column matches a given string.

Item$ is a very powerful function which can be used to parse text strings; a detailed description is beyond the scope of this article.

There are 28 date functions which cover most requirements. Dates, times and intervals all have a full range of functions. There are functions to deal with just workdays and week numbers. Holidays can be specified in a special file which can be maintained using a standard editor. These will be taken into account by the workday functions.

There are a number of functions which enable graphics to be manipulated before display. These include rotation, scaling and transformation.

The general group includes a function which returns a random number and a limited but useful Case statement (different results for different values of a single variable).

Next month we will finish this overview of the capabilities of DataPower2.

Product: DataPower2

Price: £125 single user (£350 ten users; £500 for 100 users)

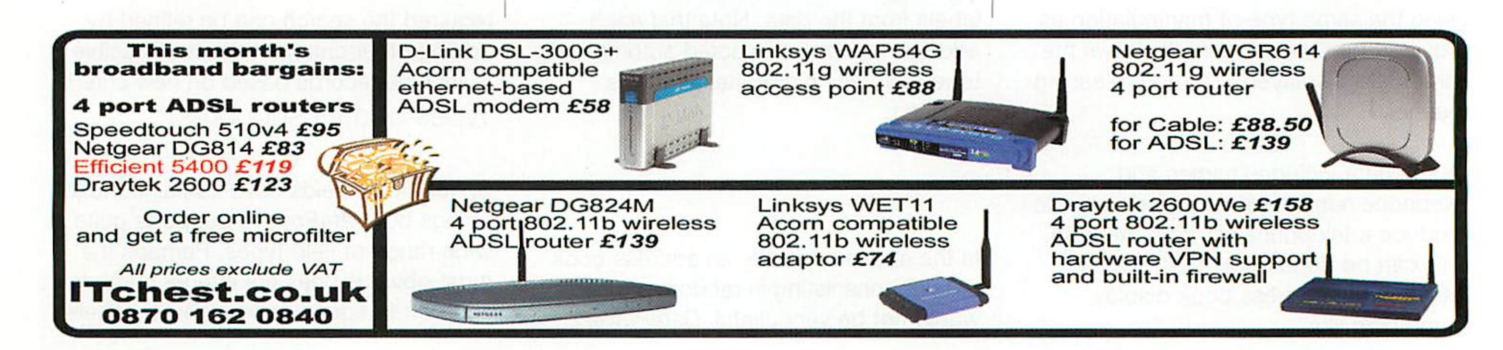
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Please note that on an Acorn computer, the scroll wheel operates as a button. To operate it as a scroll wheel requires an STD driver.

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Shut Up!

When the initial glamour fades, and the sequins are no longer in our eyes, any new technology will reveal its warts and we face the task of correcting, hiding or ignoring them. So it is with the ubiquitous computer monitor whose list of allotted ailments include glare, eye-strain, headaches, bad radiation emissions and bad backs (either from lifting them or slumping from bad screen positioning).

Now, with ergonomic adjustable chairs, Venetian blinds, and flat screen LCD monitors, we are more comfortable with our screen views and even enjoy the full colour slide show of last year's holiday snaps that substitutes for a screensaver.

But what's making that distracting buzzy-clicky sound? No, it's not the cat trying to catch the ink-jet print head as it shuttles back and forth; it's not young Jamie practising the drums with two serving spoons and an array of upturned cereal bowls. No, this is worse, an insidious, quieter sound: it's the computer ... humming.

Now that cars are quieter it's the computers turn to be examined and prodded to find out where that funny rattle is coming from, and you won't get any work done until you do! So quiet you'll forget they're there has long been a selling point for many products around the home, but the quietest clicky-hummy noises made by your computer will catch your attention and, if you're sitting in front of it in order to use it, you can't very well walk away.

As you like it

Knowing our concerns, QuietPC, a North Yorkshire-based company, supply a number of Do-It-Yourself bits and pieces that will help keep those little noises even littler. These products are intended for a PC but deal with the noise at a mechanical level and so have the potential to be applied usefully to any RISC OS machine (that makes a noise).

The AcoustiPack is the simplest solution to irritating computer noise. The pack comprises three sheets of self-adhesive noise-absorbing material: a heavy rubber sound barrier combined with a noise attenuating foam. The sticky side smells like a bicycle tyre inner tube, but that should be fine once it's stuck in place.

Once the pieces are stuck to the inside of the computer case, it simply absorbs the sound before it can get out.

The pack comes with a warning not to block ventilation slits or encroach on the cooling space around the components inside the case by adding the few millimetres of sound insulation material. Although this is the most do-it-yourself apply-to-anything sound dampening system, it is also the one where you have the least precise guidance. You could do a lot of damage just by installing these pieces. If one ends up too close to a heat-sensitive component it could lose part of its cooling airflow and overheat.

AcoustiPack is one of three packs offered, the other two being an AcoustiPack Delux and an AcoustiCase. The Delux version includes some thinner materials for narrower, but noisy, spaces, and some pre-cut drive bay blocks. The spare space left by empty drive bays is a great place for sound energy to resonate. By filling up these airspaces sound in the computer case is dampened. Imagine a guitar with a sponge in the sound hole! The AcoustiCase provides 15 pieces of sound-absorbing material. These are pre-cut to fit the various spaces available in a regular computer case.

SilentDrive

SilentDrive is a purpose-built box to contain a standard (one inch high) 3.5in hard drive. Once in the SilentDrive case, the whole bundle fits into a standard 5.25in drive bay. The sound box the drive slides into is lined with acoustic dampening material, somewhat thinner than the self-adhesive lining sold in the AcoustiPacks, and has end caps to enclose the drive on all sides.

The issue of cooling is handled by the use of two aluminium cold plates which make contact with the top and bottom of the drive inside the case and extend out through snug slits to conduct the excess heat away into the surrounding air and mountings.

The heat sinks sound like a great solutions but the manufacturers put a recommended limit on the use of this particular acoustic baffle. If your hard drive runs at 10,000 or more revolutions per minute it will generate too much heat to be safely enclosed. In fact, 7,200rpm is the maximum safe recommended speed.

Even if your drive comes in under the rpm limit, it is still advisable to check, and then double-check, the heat dissipation of the drive. This is firstly done by referring to the drive's data sheet where you will be looking for a figure of no more than 6.8W heat dissipation at idle, and secondly by putting your hand on the drive after it has been running for a few hours: If it's too hot to touch it's definitely too hot to enclose.

If you want to make your hard drive a SilentDrive you had better check all your facts before ordering.

Prevention is better than cure

The complementary approach to muffling the sound your computer makes is to prevent it making so much noise in the first place, which almost always means doing something about the cooling fans.

In the ever-so competitive computer market the fan's job is to cool the computer so you shouldn't be surprised to find that it is not optimised *for silence*, it's optimised for price. There are a number of variables you can change in order to achieve quieter cooling without increasing the temperature of the computer too much.

First of all there is the *does the fan need to be on at all?* approach, which simply requires the use of a thermostat to turn the fan off until it is needed. But just beyond that is the question: *If the fan is on, how fast does it really need to go?*

To answer this question in practice you'll need to look to QuietPC for quiet case fans including products like the Pyramid(tm) Computer Chassis Fan Noise Reduction System. This is a variable speed fan controller that can smoothly ramp up and down the speed of the cooling fan by use of a carefully placed temperature measuring device. Combine this with some Ultra-Quiet Case Fans and you'll only be using the fans at the speed they are actually required moment to moment.

PSU

QuietPC provides ATX form factor Power Supply Units of high quality which are almost silent. High quality in this case refers to the electrical output. The silent character is achieved by use of fans with near silent bearings and, in the larger 400W version, the use of two quieter fans instead of a single more noisy one.

The majority of RISC OS users don't have an ATX form factor Power Supply unit at present. This is a mechanical specification which defines the dimensions and fixing points for the power supply. But it is quite possible to put a RISC OS machine's innards into a new box with an ATX form factor power supply, so it's worth mentioning here in the quest for silence.

The white elephant

If RISC OS computers have a good, consistent, unique selling point it has to be the ARM processor: a lean machine wasting little power. Less waste means less heat and, in this article, that points to less noise. The absence of a processor mounted cooling system on RISC OS computers means that not many people will be interested in the range of virtually silent cooling fans on offer.

On the other hand most RISC OS machine owners also have PCs (even if only using them as a print server) so the PC-only details could well be of use.

However, without having to worry about actually fitting one, you can visit the QuietPC Web site and follow the links to the fitting instructions for some of these super-douper heatsink and fan cooling combinations. JavaScript and Flash permitting you will see a collection of animated fitting instructions. Nice one.

The hot favourite

A good number of products are usable in a RISC OS Computer, and those that are not fall under the disclaimer that you can't make a processor cooling fan any quieter than not having one.

You, as the courageous DIY computer upgrader, will want to take care that the quest for silence does not overshadow your computer's need for coldness. You can trust that any failure due to overheating will lead to a loss of computer function, or, worse still, a loss of computer data; you have backed-up your hard drive onto CD-ROM recently, haven't you?

The most sensible way to proceed is to use the simplest solution on the loudest part and see where you are after that.

Have a cool summer.

Acknowledgement

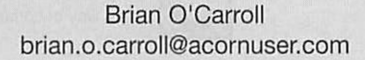
The products in this review were supplied by QuietPC.com, for which we are grateful. There are other suppliers of "quietening" products in the market. In fact both of the companies that have promoted their wares through the pages of Acorn User are ex-Acorn enthusiasts so definitely worth talking to.

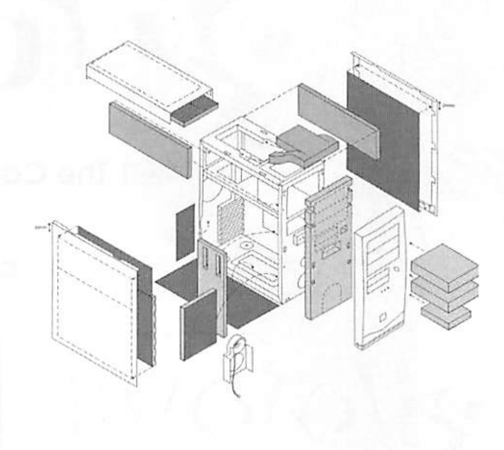
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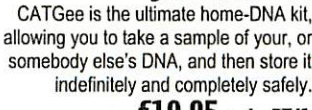
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Delivered on a plate

There are those who say that a Risc PC is not a good server for the Internet. It's too slow and unreliable. I'm not going to argue the pros and cons of that because the speed



could be faster and it's not as reliable as Linux.

But just because it may not be the best server does not for one second mean that it couldn't and shouldn't be used particularly for a home or small business network. There is software that can do it and it works very well.

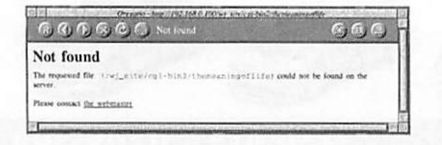
WebJames is derived from open source material which means that it is open for anyone to look at (and use) the source code. Alex Waugh has done the porting and maintains both the WebJames server and the PHP interpreter which is probably the most important bit that goes with it.



So what actually is WebJames?

When you use an Web browser to access a page the first part of the request (HTTP) specifies the protocol that is being used, the second part is the name of the domain being accessed and the third part is the actual page being requested from that domain.

WebJames is a server that can respond to HTTP requests and serves up Web pages from the machine it is running from. And that, very simplistically is all it does.



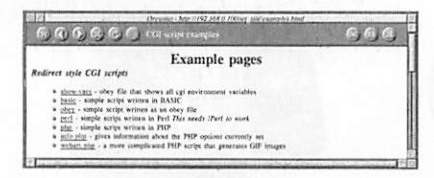
If you are developing a Web site on a computer you can use WebJames to



access the Web site so you can see it all happening.

But wait a minute! Why do you need a special program to do that? Any Web page can just be dropped into a browser to be viewed.

Well, that is true. But WebJames does go a little bit further than that. If you are developing a Web site on a single machine, and the Web pages have



perfectly standard HTML and no frills, then there is no advantage in using WebJames.

But if, for example, you are using PHP for your Web pages (like the acornuser.com Web site), or you are utilising server-side includes that your Web host let's you have. Or if you actually have a small local area network at home or in a business and you want to view the pages on another machine, or indeed create a local "intranet". Then WebJames is your piece of software. It can give you PHP, Perl, server-side includes and a lot more besides.

Installation

The first thing to do is to download it from **www.alexwaugh.com**, it's not too big. There are a few other things you have to have available: an Internet stack needs to be available either the Acorn one or the one for the ANT Suite.

If it's the ANT Suite one you have to either have a network card working or set-up the "loopback" driver which allows you to send HTTP requests to yourself. Drivers for other network cards have loopback running as standard and, as you can read from my Remote Control article, this was indeed the case. The instructions for WebJames cover this pretty well. The Acorn stack has loopback configured on by default.

You will also need the MimeMap module version 0.10 or later, which can be downloaded it from **www.movspclr.co.uk** and put it in !System.310.Modules.Network

You put WebJames in some appropriate



part of your system and double-click it. Nothing appears to happen as there is no iconbar icon but you can check that it is running by seeing if it is listed in the Task manager.

If your Web browser is using proxying it will have to be turned off, or the domain "localhost" has to be added to the list of domains that shouldn't be proxied. WebJames is automatically set-up to use its default pages as the Web site that it serves.

Going now to the Web browser, enter the URL of **http://localhost/** should give you the basic pages and a message saying that WebJames is working.

I followed this sequence through the first time and found that it worked perfectly. The sample pages allow you to examine the various features of WebJames including PHP, Perl (if you have it) and running RISC OS programs as scripts (Obey files, Basic programs and so on).

Configuring

There are two configure files inside WebJames, one is called Config and

unless you're an expert you probably won't be changing much in here.

Some things you can alter though are the location where temporary files are put. Normally Scrap is used but you can, for example, change it to the RAM disc which means that scripts will run a lot faster. The file is very well commented and everything is explained clearly so it's worth reading through.

The second file is called "attributes" and this one you probably will want to change. For example there is the line that specifies where the Web site is on the hard disc, since you probably won't want to just keep the old one. Then there is specifying the Server name. This is either the full domain name of the server or it's the IP address on the local network. See my article on Remote Control about setting up the IP addresses.

By fixing this correctly you can then get other machines on the network to access the Web sites via WebJames and hence create your own Intranet.

You also specify the e-mail address of the administrator in case of error. There are other items too.

When I was trying to set up WebJames for an Intranet at work I couldn't get it to work at all, everything seemed to be going swimmingly but every time I tried to access the default index file it wouldn't work.

There were a number of problems: First I hadn't specified the location of the Web pages correctly, then I hadn't set server name. But it still wouldn't work.

Looking slowly through the attributes file I came across one thing a global attribute called "defaultfile" now I was trying to access the site by using "http://localhost/" and nothing came up, it was telling me it couldn't find the file "/". It finally dawned on me.

In the defaultfile setting it gives a list of default file names like this:

```
defaultfile index.php index.html
index.shtml index
```

In my sample Web site my default index file was "index/htm" a three letter extension which was not in the list, hence it couldn't find a matching file. A simple mistake and an easy fix but it had me going for a couple of hours.

If you are looking to develop a Web site that is more than just straight HTML, or if you want to learn how to program PHP or Perl in a Web context WebJames is very definitely the program to get your hands on. It is a very valuable resource.

Steve Turnbull
steve.turnbull@acornuser.com

All about PHP

I thought I would also take this opportunity to take a look at what PHP has to offer in terms of programming Web pages.

It can be a bit difficult getting your head around PHP, HTML and what is seen on the monitor of your computer in a Web browser. These three things are actually distinct and can be different. All programming languages have their little quirks and once you understand the quirks you can really go to town with them.

First let's look at the difference between the three layers, from the middle outwards. HTML is (basically) a language which describes how text should appear on screen. It is a textual description, it is not the final form. It has a header area, the main area and a footer area each of which contains its own sub-sections.

It is HTML that is passed from a Web page server across to a Web browser usually using the HTTP protocol. The browser then takes the HTML and interprets it into a visual representation that you see on screen. A key point to note is that there is not necessarily a one-to-one correlation between the HTML and how it is interpreted on to the screen.

This is how/why Javascript works. It is contained within the HTML and, when interpreted, tells the browser to put certain things into the visual representation which may not be in the HTML itself. The use of Javascript as one method of thwarting the e-mail harvester depends on this fact:

A piece of Javascript code in the HTML tells the browser to construct an e-mail address out of unrecognisable component parts in the HTML. On-screen it looks and behaves like a normal e-mail address, but the harvester sees the HTML and cannot see an e-mail address. It cannot look at the constructed on-screen version.

HTML can either be stored as simple files which just go direct to the browser, or the server itself can process other types of file to build the HTML freshly (and differently) each time based on what the user is actually asking for.

PHP is just such a language (like Perl and others), it is interpreted at the server end and generates HTML which is then sent to the browser which interprets the HTML to come up with a final on-screen version.

PHP can have parameters, you only have to look at the Acorn User Web site to see how that works this page, for example:

```
http://www.acornuser.com/a
cornuser.php?page=contacts
```

will bring up the page of contacts. However this page is constructed from a number of different elements, there is the standard header which is one file, the menu down the side which is another, the main body and then the ending section which rounds it all off.

These are put together through simple "includes" but the main section is dependent on the value of the parameter. The navigation menu on the left is a little bit clever though you might not notice: The current page is always omitted. I haven't quite decided whether this is a good thing or not but it is clever.

The magazine page shows a list of the magazine issues to come and when their on-sale date is. We do get complaints about parts of the site not being updated enough but this list will always be up-to-date as a piece of PHP code constantly dates and recalculates the on-sale dates and puts them into an HTML table.

PHP is clever, if you have an understanding of C it will only take you a couple of hours with WebJames to get the hang of it, after that it is a matter of learning all the routines that you can use to manipulate HTML to achieve the desired results.

Happy Web programming

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Going Gnuts

CocoGnut is RISC OS's first GUI peer-to-peer file-sharing client to be compatible with the Gnutella network. Before we look at CocoGnut, let me answer a few questions.

What is peer-to-peer file-sharing? This is a file-sharing technique in which each user has access to the public files located on the workstation of any other network user. There is no central server. Instead, each user determines which files, if any, he or she wants to make public for network access. For example, many users choose to share MP3 audio, JPEG images and MPEG videos.

You might have heard of Kazaa or Napster, Audiogalaxy or Gnutella, these are examples of peer-to-peer file-sharing networks. Using the appropriate software you can connect to these networks to search for files and, perhaps, choose to share your own.

What is the Gnutella network? Gnutella is currently one of the more popular examples of peer-to-peer networking. In this case, users connect via the Internet. The software they use to access the network (a client) shares a common protocol. A protocol specifies how a program should prepare its data so that it can be understood by another program following the same protocol.

This means that people using different clients on different platforms, for example BearShare in Windows or CocoGnut in RISC OS, can communicate with each other because they all speak the same language. Unlike commercial examples of peer-to-peer networking, like Kazaa, Gnutella's protocol is open, ensuring a brighter future because of its lack of dependency on any individual or company.

Gnutella is popular; literally hundreds of thousands of users are connected from all different parts of the globe. Because of this, finding the file you require is usually very easy. Someone, somewhere will have the file you want, hopefully!

CocoGnut allows RISC OS users to access the Gnutella network and, although quite primitive in comparison with clients on other platforms, allows you to use the main features of the Gnutella protocol.

CocoGnut comes with comprehensive online help. This explains how to install, configure and use the application. I followed these helpful instructions. The first setting I was required to change in CocoGnut's configuration file was the location of the files that I wanted to share. You may choose to leave this blank. Some users may not like the idea of editing a configuration file, and it's certainly something that I would like to see changed (configuration by a GUI interface would be much nicer), but with the instructions, it's not too difficult.

Once CocoGnut was configured and loaded (after I had made sure I was connected to the Internet), the first thing I noticed was how clean and simple it looked (what a contrast to some of the MS Windows clients I have used). There are no banners or pop-up windows, just one central window with a number of different tabbed options down the left-hand side.

The options allow us to monitor connections to Gnutellanet, view our active downloads and uploads (although the upload feature has not been implemented at the time of writing); more importantly, search for files; and lastly, view statistics about incoming and outgoing connections.

Once CocoGnut has established one or more connections to other clients (which we monitor in the Gnutellanet section), we may now use its search facility. As an example, I tried searching for an MP3 audio file. I entered the name of the track as well as the term "MP3" so that the search would only return files with an MP3 extension. I waited, and after a couple of minutes the search window displayed many variations of the file I was looking to obtain. Any number of these files could then be downloaded.

It is important to note at this stage that search results can take sometime (it is searching across the Internet), but the beauty of CocoGnut is that you can close the main window and it will continue searching for you in the background. This means that you can get on with something else and then return to CocoGnut a couple of minutes later to view the results.

A vital Internet tool?

I certainly think so. Gnutella is not like a search engine; specific files are found efficiently and directly. No longer will you need to wade through Web pages or FTP sites to find that all important file.

Like many RISC OS programs, CocoGnut offers a refreshing approach to an established technology. Its simplicity over other clients is its main virtue and with features like upload support planned for near release, it will soon be a tough rival.

Sounds great, but is it affordable? Yes. Priced at £15, this is one application that no Internet user has an excuse to be without. And future feature/bug updates will be provided free via e-mail (as documented on the CocoGnut Web site).

Addressing some problems

Like all new programs, CocoGnut has its faults. For example, there are one or two minor inconsistences in the GUI interface and there is the occassional network problem.

I spoke to the developer, Marc Warne, about this network problem. He said that "the socket problems are going to be the top priority for bug fixing". I also asked him when the upload feature would be implemented, "Uploading is almost complete and will be released soon".

I also look forward to the time when the program becomes 32-bit compliant so that Iyonix users can enjoy the program as well.

Conclusion

Cocognut has enhanced my Internet experience; it has become one of my "must-have" Internet programs, along with my e-mail viewer, browser and FTP client.

Gnutella Web site: www.gnutella.com

CocoGnut Web site:
www.alpha-programming.co.uk/software/cocognut/

Ian Chamberlain
ian.chamberlain@acornuser.com



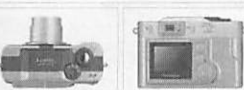
What can you plug in?

USB is great as an interface but it only has value if you can plug things into it. We have taken some space in this issue to summarise the USB hardware that can be plugged into the Castle USB system.

We will take a look next month at the capabilities of the Simtec USB system. However it is worth pointing out that both systems will handle standard USB keyboard and mice plus most hubs.

It is also worth mentioning that for some reason, despite a very clear explanation of what "standard" actually is for this interface, many hardware suppliers still manage to produce non-standard devices. Whether this is deliberate or not isn't clear but for whatever reason, if you are buying from a non-RISC OS supplier you must make sure you can return the product if it doesn't work. Better still: Use a RISC OS supplier.





Panasonic Lumix DMC-LC20 2.1M pixel digital camera. Tested reading and writing JPEGs off the 8Mb and 64Mb Secure Digital cards via the cable supplied by Panasonic

Olympus Camedia C-3040Z 3.3 Mpixel camera. Quick test shows pictures may be downloaded.

CR-V7-UM Memory Stick card reader



Scanlogic Belkin 8-in-1 card reader Model F5U148 reads Compact Flash I and II, Smartmedia, SD, MMC, Microdrive, Memory stick and memory gate.

Quad Reader Dazzle 6 in 1 card reader Reads Compact Flash I and II, Smartmedia, Microdrive, Memory stick.

VIEW USB 2 port KVM 2 port keyboard, video and mouse switch. Include 3 port USB hub and external power socket.

iVIEW 4 port USB KVM (773) 4 port keyboard, video and mouse switch with 3 port USB hub and external power socket.

OK Drive 64MB USB keyring style storage device



Easydisc USB flash keyring Removable 16Mbyte flash keyring

Iomega 750M ZIP USB drive ZIP removable drive accepting the popular range of ZIP discs. Works with the 100Mb cartridge supplied, the 750Mb cartridges are extra.

Diography flash pen 64Mb Removable flash drive, the size of a pen.



Plextor PX-S88TU USB slimline CDRW unit 24x8x8 Recognised as a SCSI device and responds appropriately but CDFSSoftSCSI required to actually read CDs.

Buffalo "Clip Drive" USB solid state disc with lapel clip, 64Mbyte unit worked perfectly, support for long Windows filenames would be great.

Genius Optical 3 button scroll mouse (Netscroll+ Eye) Scroll button software needed for scroll wheel to work.

Prolific USB to parallel adapter This is the chip that most USB to Parallel adapters use, an IEEE1248 port. There is a module to add Parallel_Op and Parallel_Hardware address over USB also available for hardware projects.



MSys Disgo 64Mbyte USB flash keyring

Alcor Micro Corp. USB Minihub Unpowered 4 way hub

Canon BJ i550 colour inkjet printer High quality separate ink tank, fast Canon printer. Excellent printer also features a parallel port. Also available for all other USB-ready RISC OS computers.

Canon BJ S330 inkjet printer Entry-level USB inkjet printer, two ink tanks and fast performance. Also available for all other USB-ready RISC OS computers.

Canon BJ S530D inkjet printer High quality USB inkjet printer with four ink tanks and memory card slot for direct printing. Also available for all USB-ready RISC OS computers.

Epson 1660 photo scanner High quality, fast, Flat-bed scanner. Built-in film adaptor, 1600 dpi resolution.

Epson 1650 photo scanner High quality, fast, Flat-bed scanner. Built-in film adaptor, 1600 dpi resolution.

Epson 1640SU High quality, fast, Flat-bed scanner. USB or SCSI, 1600 dpi resolution.

Belkin USB2.0 hub 4 port hub

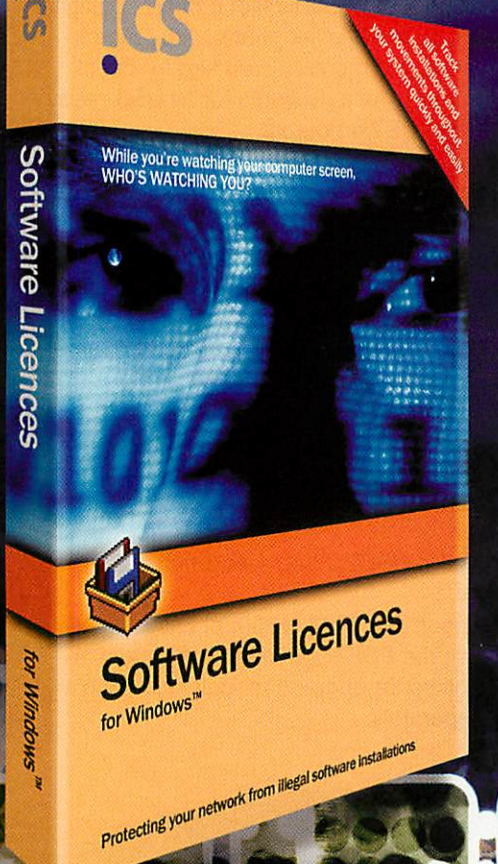
Epson EPL5800 1200dpi Laser printer, use the PDF supplied with !Printers. A postscript upgrade module is available separately



Rob Donaldson
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While you're watching your computer screen, WHO'S WATCHING YOU?

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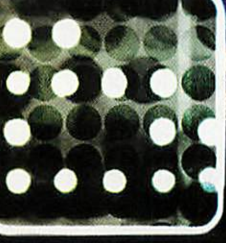
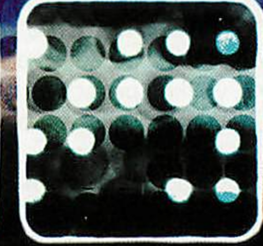
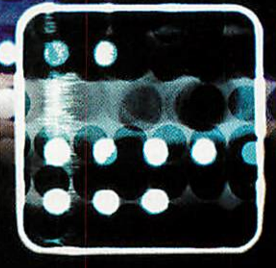
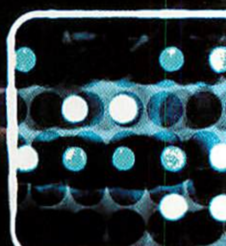
Protection from illegal software installations

Is your system running any unlicensed or illegal software? Without searching through all the hard disks of all your computers, would you even know?

It may seem like the least of your worries. But if you're caught running unlicensed software, you can expect a crippling fine and up to two years in prison. There are incentives of up to £10,000 for whistleblowers to inform on you.

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(5) CJE 5x86 PC second processor card for RiscPC. 133MHz, 512k cache. Comes with PCPro software.
(6) Computer Concepts LaserDirect4 laser printer plus podule. All software and original manuals.
(7) Epson GT9000 A4 flatbed SCSI scanner. Original boxes and manuals.
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• For Sale,586 PC CARD for Risc PC, by Aleph1,includes PC Pro 3,also Windows 95 or 98, cost over £300 pounds, will accept £90 or near offer, Radcliffe,Manchester, please phone 0161 280 3375 or email, j.jackh@ntlworld.com

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Soft scoop

Kudlian Soft (07000 583542) have been awarded a major contract to install its Pictogram and Terry 2 programs in all of the 35 primary schools on the Isle of Man. A good year for Kudlian as Pictogram was awarded The Best Primary Resource at this year's Education Resources Awards.

Headlining

The BESA New Educational Technologies Group (BNETG) has elected Barbara Higginbottom, UK Sales Director of datalogging and control specialist Data Harvest, as their chairperson. The group was formed last July and all involved design and manufacture ICT equipment and peripherals for the UK education market. Its brief is to deal with a range of issues from lobbying to ensure that the ICT sector remain prominent and that spending mechanisms do not disadvatage the hardware and perompherals sector, to circulating information of emerging overseas markets.



Top of the class

Afghanistan's first home-grown class of information technology students has graduated at Kabul University. A United Nations official said the impoverished nation, which is only now emerging from isolation, had a real chance to catch up with the rest of the modern world.

Among the 17 graduates are six young women, one of whom described their achievement as a message to Afghan women as a whole after years of educational discrimination: "My message for all Afghan women is to try as much as possible to learn about computers because it is essential for every man and woman to be aware of this global technology," said 23 year-old Rita Dorani.

Under the Taleban Islamic fundamentalist regime, ousted in 2001, women were banned from all forms of education. President Hamid Karzai has relaxed the restrictions but women's rights are still significantly curtailed in Afghanistan, especially in the provinces.

Ms Dorani and her fellow students received industry-standard certificates in computer networking skills after completing a UN-supervised programme largely funded by computer giant Cisco Systems. By the end of this year, the programme aims to have trained up 200 students: "This graduating class will mark history for Afghanistan," said Ercan Murat, country director for the UN Development Programme. "They are the first highly trained computer specialists in Afghanistan who were trained here in their own country. They now have the tools to make a difference at home."

Knut Ostby, UNDP deputy director for Afghanistan, suggested that starting from scratch could be a distinct advantage for Afghanistan: "It is giving Afghanistan some tremendous opportunities in terms of skipping a number of intermediate steps and going straight to the state-of-the-art technology of today," he said.

For Nabila Akbari, 18, graduating means she can share her knowledge "with other Afghans, especially Afghan women".

Heads rewarded

The Government's policy of spotlighting outstanding figures from state education saw three more head teachers pick up awards in the 2003 Birthday Honours list published today. All three run comprehensives: John Rowling, head of Nunthorpe School, Middlesbrough, is knighted, while Pamela Coward of Middleton Technology School, Manchester, and Ruth Robins, of the Jewish Free School in London, become Dames of the British Empire.

The now named Sir John Rowling has been head of the 1,400 pupil "beacon" school for the past 19 years. He paid tribute to his staff, whom he said had helped Nunthorpe improve its GCSE results to the point where they were the best of any state school in the North of England. Last year, 79.1 per cent got at least five A * to C-grades and Sir John was hoping for another big improvement this year, thanks to an unusual scheme he has started.

With a total of 270 GCSE students, the school selected 125 on the C/D-grade border and the A*/A border to get extra private tuition in the evenings. Parents had to pay a £10 "bond" in order for them to take part and if their children attended every session, they got their money back!

Dame Pamela Coward of Middleton Technology School, Manchester has seen her school progress from bottom to the top of local league tables. Even though the school was in one of the poorest parts of north Manchester, she made it clear to her pupils that they were there to learn, as education was "their route to a better life". Since 1997, the proportion of pupils getting at least five A* to C-grades at GCSE has risen from 34 per cent to 56 per cent.

Dame Pamela declared: "The challenge really is to eradicate street values from the school and to get everybody involved, to get parents supportive and to feel that education is valuable and to give children the confidence to feel they can compete with anyone anywhere."

Get digging

Channel 4's Time Team is busy on its biggest ever project with its Big Dig. This will involve 2,500 test pits being dug over a weekend, encouraging everybody to get involved in a search for this country's buried heritage. Some academics are questionning whether the needs of archeology or TV come first here? Or whether this is informed or dumbed down treasure hunting? It's an interesting debate for schools. The Time Team Big Dig takes place on the 28-29th June. For more information, pop along to **www.channel4.com/bigdig**

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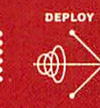




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Spam is getting worse and as a result, even with the use of Feathermail filtering the Acorn User e-mail is still receiving hundreds of spams per day, due to our early ignorance.

As a result we are being forced to change our e-mail addresses. The domain remains the same, we are still "acornuser.com", but we are in the process of changing the e-mail addresses so that all the others can be simply bounced back which, after a while we hope, will result in a reduction if not complete stop of rubbish.

The trick we are employing is very simple each Acorn User e-mail address should now be prefixed with "au", you will see that in most of the e-mail addresses printed in this magazine. These addresses will be filtered at our ISP and routed appropriately within the organisation. So, for example, letters@acornuser.com now becomes auletters@acornuser.com, and so on.

Of the old e-mail addresses, many which have not been in use for a long time, are getting bounced at the ISP end sending back a message which implies they no longer exist.

Active e-mail addresses, like editor@acornuser.com will be kept on for a few months during the transition stage but we cannot guarantee we will see your e-mails if you send to this one.

If you look at the new names on the Web site you may think we are just doing the same old thing again. But we're not, addresses only appear correct as displayed, in fact they are disguised in Javascript if you look at the original HTML. E-mail harvesters only look for obvious e-mail addresses.

Additionally we will now be providing Acorn User addresses to any one who writes for the magazine rather than providing their actual e-mail address. The reason for this is privacy. Anyone who wants to respond to the author can do so directly but after a while we will remove the e-mail address (assuming they don't write for us again soon after).

We hope these new policies will help everyone concerned because we are quite sure we are losing e-mails sent by readers in this.

Rob Donaldson
Editor

Cost of Ownership: the negative

If that letter you published last month was really what was sent to the various Local Authorities I cannot see that anything but harm was done.

It was so unprofessional, the grammar was very poor in places and the logic wasn't logical.

I don't mean to decry the good intentions behind it but, quite honestly, the road to hell is paved with those and the perpetrator of this deed laid a good many more paving stones in that direction.

What was he trying to achieve? Trying to prove that it costs more to support computers professionally than by using the labour of overworked teachers?

Well fine, anyone can demand that teachers who are falling apart under the stress of far too much (unnecessary) administration, should now be expected to be the maintainers of the school's hardware as well.

Was he expecting the whole education system to suddenly dump their PCs and move back to Acorn? When there is no software? I don't think so.

Cost of ownership is actually the tiniest issue. I do not, for one second, dispute that if every school in the land could run RISC OS machines instead of PCs that ICT costs would fall dramatically.

But it isn't going to happen, not like this. All this does is make people wrong and you don't make any progress by proving someone has made a wrong decision and trying to rub their noses in it.

It just makes people wrong and it makes them wrong all the way up to the top. Do you think Tony Blair is going to change government policy because someone can show him some figures that say his previous decisions were wrong?

If you do, you're naive. And don't think it's different for any political party, it isn't. It's the same for every damn person in the country, including me.

Positive PR and marketing is the only way you'll ever get anywhere. This survey has some academic interest, in fact it does have some value in that we can see that: (a) no local authority has a clue what they're doing (because the results vary so widely); (b) they are spending too much (some of them are spending *way* too much).

It is data that can be used but not by rubbing people's noses in it. So: 3 out of 10. Must do better.

John Grimshaw
Henley

Interesting. Following that logic the way to get RISC OS back into education is to get it into business and the homes in a big way. I wonder how we can do that? Any ideas?

Cost of Ownership: the positive

Well done that man! It's about time someone took the trouble to show those bureaucrats how much they're wasting. If we are going to win back the market for RISC OS we've really got to start fighting back.

Education is definitely the area to fight back in. The name of Acorn has got to be splashed every where again, we have to get all those old companies back and fighting for our side. I'm sure they want to, they've all been taken over by the dark side because of the money involved.

We need more initiatives like this, we need people taking these sort of results and demanding that their MPs actually do something about it. I know I will be. Who else?

Richard Grahame
via e-mail

Enthusiasm is a good thing but I'm sure we can be more effective working as a team. Pressure groups do work but only when they actually work as a group. And it's all very well going to politicians and saying they have to stop spending so much money on PCs but what are you going to replace it with?

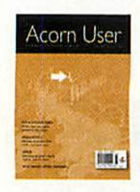
I know for a fact that many of the old Acorn education companies would like to see Acorn machines back again but there is no way they will put money into developing products that have no market. These things have to be thought about.

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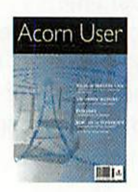
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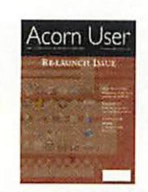
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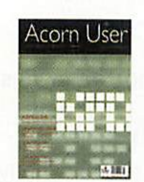
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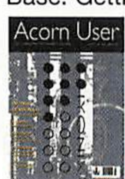
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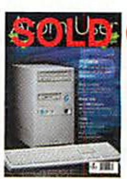
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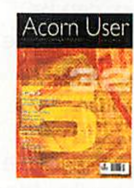
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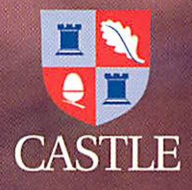
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